HISTORY OF TAMIL NADU 1565-1982

K. RAJAYYAN

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1565-1982

K. RAJAYYAN,
M.A., M.Litt., A.M., Ph.D.
Professor and Head,
School of Historical Studies,
M. K. University, Madurai.

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PREFACE

For long Tamil Nadu had neither ancient history nor modern history in written works. At the most it had medieval history, covering the age of the Pallavas, the Cholas and the Pandyas. As a result of the discovery of the Sangam Literature, the later part of ancient history was wrested from oblivion; yet modern history remained totally neglected. However, thanks to the initiative taken by the School of Historical Studies, M.K. University, modern history has emerged as a popular subject of study. The present work is undertaken with a view to strengthening the content of this study, so that we are enabled to know, where we are in history. Written with reference to archival data, press reports, published works and my own publications, this study represents an original contribution to historical scholarship.

I convey my thanks to my colleagues and friends who have extended their assistance unreservedly for the preparation of this work. They helped me in the collection of data and correction of proof. Among them I must mention Dr. J. Alasiar, Dr. B. Sobhanan, Dr. J. Thiyagarajan, Dr. K. Gowri, Thiru Sethuraman, Selvi S. Rajalakshmi and Thiru. R. Ponnu.

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Madurai,
31-12-1982.

K. Rajayyan

By the same Author

In English

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2. A History of British Diplomacy in Tanjore
3. South Indian Rebellion, The First War of Independence 1800-1801.
4. Rise and Fall of the Poligars of Tamilnadu.
5. A History of the United States.
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8. A History of Madurai (1736-1801)
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10. Indian Resistance to American Expansion.
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13. Varalattu Kodpadum Murayiyalum.
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INTRODUCTION

Tamil Nadu, the home land of the Tamils, occupies the southern most region of India. Traditionally, Thiruvenkatam - the abode of Sri Venkateswara and a range of hills of the Eastern Ghats - formed the northern boundary of the country and the Arabian Sea line the western boundary. However, as the result of the infiltrations, made by peoples from other territories, Tamil lost its ground in the west as well as in the north In medieval times the country, west of the mountains, became Kerala and that in the north turned part of Andhra Desa. Bounded by the states of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Desa, the Tamil Nadu of the present day extends from Kanyakumari in the south to Tiruttani in the north. It consists of four historical divisions- Pandyanadu Cholanadu (Cholamandalam), Kongunadu and Pallavanadu (Tondaimandalam) with their principal cities at Madurai, Thanjavur, Coimbatore and Kanchipuram respectively.

The Tamil Country possesses neither much of geographical charm nor much of natural attraction. A barren land and very warm area, the climate is unbearable for most of the year, the rainfall is unreliable and the soil is not generally rich. The little yet uncertain rainfall, that the country receives, occurs in November-December, that itself through tempests and cyclones, causing considerable loss to life and property. Neither do islands nor do harbours, add to its geographical variety. However, there live in this land a hard working and intelligent people, waging a constant struggle against the odds of nature. The industrious nature and submissive habits of the population have made the Tamils easy victims to foreign domination in the past and bureaucratic aggression during the present.

The literary traditions, the splendid monuments, the numerous inscriptions and the charitable endowments shed light on the history of the past. In early times the Pandyas, the Cheras and the Cholas held their pioneering sway over

the country and extended their authority beyond the traditional frontiers. As a result the Tamil Country served as the home-land of extensive empires. It was during this period that the Tamil bards composed the masterpieces in Tamil literature. Vaishnavism, Saivism, Buddhism and Jainism spread during this period. Frequently, they came into violent conflicts, yet they continued to survive.

In the first decade of the fourteenth century the rising tide of Afghan imperialism swept over South India. The Tughluqs created a new province in the Tamil Country called Mabar, with its capital at Madurai, which in 1335 asserted independence as the Sultanate of Madurai. After a short period of stormy existence it gave way to the Vijayanagar Empire. The country lost its position as the home land of empires. Since then the Telugus, the Bahminis, the Marathas and the Kannadins wrested possession of the territory. Between 1798 and 1801 the country passed under the direct administration of the English East India Company. As a result the Tamils languished under an oppressive system, imposed by the Europeans. In 1947 they gained their independence in India. Yet the foot prints of the tyrannical sway are very visible-they are visible in the attitudes of administration and the misery of the inhabitants.

Chapter 1

THE TELUGU NAYAKS

In consequence of the collapse of the Chola, Chera and Pandya kingdoms, the alien powers extended their sway to the Tamil country. The Afghans, the Hoysalas and the Telugus established their authority and carved out territories of their own. By 1465 A. D. the forces of Vijayanagar overran the country and reduced the powers of Tamil Nadu to submission. On the ruins of the territorial possessions of the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra, the Sultans of Madurai and the Pandyas of Tenkasi there emerged several Telugu powers, of whom the most powerful were those of Senji, Thanjavur and Madurai. Their rule in one part or other of Tamilakam lasted upto 1736, when the Nevayets of Arcot extended their sway to the far South. These Telugu rulers were called the Nayaks and their administration was the Nayankara System.

Sources for Nayak History

The sources of information for the history of the Nayaks of Tamil Nadu are mostly epigraphic as well as literary. The epigraphic sources are inscriptions, found on the walls of the temples, and copper plate grants. Among the literary sources are the letters of the Jesuits, chronicles written by court poets, ballads composed for the purpose of recital at local festivals and the factory records of European merchants. Except the letters of the Europeans, the other sources are not specific about the dates or events. The inscriptions are of contemporary interest but it cannot be said of the ballads, for they were composed even in later periods. Nevertheless these sources furnish a comprehensive account about the rise and fall of the Nayak powers in the land of the Tamils.

Inscriptions are found in Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese and Sanskrit. Colin Mackenzie in his *Collections*, Robert Sewell in his *Lists of Antiquities* and V. Rangacharya in his *Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency* and Burgess and Natesa Sastri in their

Tamil and Saskrit Inscriptions furnish copies of these evidences relating to the history of the Nayak powers. Many of them tell of the grants made by the rulers and chieftains to the Brahmins and temples. They also refer to matters relating to taxation, irrigation, local institutions, public works, charitable institutions and the like. The Nayak powers built or re-built numerous temples, choultries and mantapas. Many of these structures had perished because of the indifference of the administration, yet a few of them have continued to survive. These monuments and the paintings on them throw light on the social, economic and cultural history of the age of the Nayaks.

The literary sources consist of chronicles, ballads, memoirs and epistolary works. William Taylor had collected, translated and edited many of the local records and published them in his *Oriental Historical Manuscripts* in 1835. The *Catalogue Raisonne of Oriental Manuscripts* published by him in three volumes between 1857 and 1862 is a collection of abstracts of local documents. He took painstaking effort in gathering and editing these sources. However, it cannot be denied that because of his western orientation, the translations do not always convey the original meaning. Colonel Mackenzie too had collected numerous chronicles and memoirs and recorded the statements and notices, that he received. Though he made no clear distinction between what was authentic and not and what was useful and not, his collections reflect upon the traditions of the land. Known as the *Mackenzie Manuscripts*, they furnish a variety of information on the history of the Telugu powers. Among the chronicles of the period, Ganga Devi's Sanskrit work, *Mathura Vijayam*, describes the expansion of the Vijayanagar Empire to the Madurai Country. *The History of the Carnataka Governors* is misleading in chronology, yet it furnishes useful data on the rulers of the land. *Mritunjaya Manuscripts* and the *Pandyan Chronicle* not only shed light on the history of the times but also give dates of events. The Telugu work, *Thanjavuri Andhra Rajula Charitra* and the Sanskrit work *Raghunathabhyudayam* give valuable information on the history of

the Nayaks of Thanjavur. The Sanskrit works, *Sahityaratnakara* and *Rukmini Parinayam*, too furnish glimpses of information. The Kannada works *Kanthirava Narasaraja Vijaya*, *Chikkadevaraja Vijaya* and *Chikkadevaraja Vamsavali* describe the extension of Mysorean sway over the Nayak powers in a language of glorification. They are of importance for the rich material that they give on diplomacy, strategy of war, fortification and the like and for the elegance of language in which historical facts are presented.

The Letters of the Jesuit Mission to Rome are the epistolary sources. Originally written in Latin, Italian and Portuguese languages, they were translated into French by Father J. Bertrand and published as *La Mission du Madure* in four volumes between 1847 and 1854. John Lockman's *Travels of the Jesuits* published in two volumes in 1762 and John Nieuhoff's *Voyages and Travels into Brasil and East Indies* primarily deal with Jesuit missionary activity in South India. J. Z. Kiernander's *Religious and Missionary Intelligence*, published in 1847, is an account of the Protestant missions in South India. These letters deal not only with religion but also with polity, society and economy of the country. They narrate the efforts that they took in gaining converts and building chapels, the difficulties that they encountered, condition of towns and other matters like civil wars, famines and epidemics. They also give descriptions about the Nayak rule in Senji, the conflict between the Telugus and the Maravas and the wars between Madurai and Thanjavur.

Extensive learning, keen interest that they took in studying local languages and intimate knowledge of the customs of the inhabitants made these missionaries eminently qualified to deal with the developments in the country. The accounts given by them not only withstand internal scrutiny but prove very reliable in the light of the information, furnished by local chronicles and Muslim accounts. Also they serve as corrective to the biased or incomplete notices furnished by the local chronicles, when they wrote on the rulers of Karnataka, Nayaks of Tamil Nadu and the Temple of Srirangam. Yet it should be asserted that the fundamental interest of the Jesuits

was with Christianity. In consequence they had given favoured treatment to the rulers when they tolerated their activity and condemned others, when they persecuted them. Yet with adequate margin being given to the angle from which they viewed at the events, it is possible to utilize them profitably for reconstructing the history of Tamil Nadu under the Telugus.

Apart from these, there are accounts given by Muslim writers and records preserved in European settlements. The works of Fernao Nuniz and Domingo Paes, translated by Robert Sewell in his *A Forgotten Empire* throw side lights on the history of the Nayaks and the Muslims in South India. Among the factory records are those of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes and the English. These European merchants erected factories and entered into trade with the Nayak kingdoms. Their primary interest was trade, yet as the political situation in the country directly affected their commercial interests, they took an abiding interest in the internal developments and recorded their impressions accordingly. The letters exchanged by them with the Nayak princes and the grants obtained from the kings and the chieftains are of much benefit to the historian of the prieod for ascertaining the political developments and social conditions.

Nayankara System

When the Emperors of Vijayanagar conquered the country from the Muslim and Tamil powers they needed loyal chiefs, ready to serve them in times of peace as well as in times of war. They also wanted to accommodate members of princely families, influential chieftains and devoted servants in the political set up, that they erected. These considerations led them to the establishment of what is mentioned in the inscriptions, the Nayankara System. The sovereign divided the territory into what were called *nāyakattinams* and entrusted them with the chieftains called nayaks. They were usually Telugus or Kannadins. Krishna Deva Raya (1509—1529 A.D.), who is considered as the greatest among the Emperors of Vijayanagar, extended this system to the Tamil Country. During the reign

of Emperor Achyuta Raya (1529-1542 A.D.) there were about 200 nayaks in the Vijayanagar Empire. Among them the Nayaks of Madurai, Thanjavur, Senji and Ikkeri emerged as the most powerful. The nayaks in their turn formed *palayams* or *palamus* and assigned them to subordinate chieftains known as the *palayakkarans* or *poligars*.[1] The *nayankara* or *amaranayaka* system was a feudal grant made by the prince to subordinate chieftains on condition of service, generally military and police.[2]

In practice the Nayankara System presented a graded form of oppression in Tamil Nadu. In the name of the Emperor of Vijayanagar the Nayaks deprived the Tamil peasants of their rights to the ownership of land, reduced them to the status of mere tenants and took away their earnings. Fernao Nuniz, a foreign visitor, rightly observes: "All the land belongs to the king and from his hand the captains hold it. They make it over to the tenants who pay nine-tenths of the income to their Lord and they have no land of their own, for the kingdom belongs entirely to the king". In fact the Telugu nobles exacted from the Tamil peasants nine tenths of the produce and paid a part of collections to the nayak. In their turn the nayaks paid half of their collections to the emperor as tribute. With the rest of the revenue they lived a life of pomp and splendour.[3] They made donations to Brahmins and the temples, offered rich presents to religious and political heads and competed with each other to gain the favour of their overlord. Frequently there broke out conflicts too. Ignorant and vain glorious, they usually settled their disputes for land and women on fields of battle.

The nayaks exercised varied duties and functions. They administered justice, exercised police authority and supervised the collection of taxes. As military chieftains, they maintained

1. A. Krishnaswami, *The Tamil Country Under Vijayanagar*, Annamalainagar, 1964, pp. 177-179.
2. T. V. Mahalingam, *Administration and Social Life Under Vijayanagar*, part II, Madras, 1975, p. 111.
3. R. Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, London, 1924 p. 379.

a fixed number of armed men, horses, camels and elephants for service to the emperor in times of wars. They constructed forts for military protection, donated Tamil villages to the Brahmins and patronised religion.[4] The nayak had his representative, called *stanapathi* at the imperial capital not only to take care of his interest but also to keep the sovereign in good humour. However, if he failed in his duties, he was deprived of his office and was punished. As the imperial authority weakened itself, the nayaks gained in more of powers and sought to assert their rule on a hereditary basis. In fact in course of time they became independent rulers and the emperors ceased to have any authority over them.

The organisation of the Nayankara System in Tamil Nadu is traced to the last years of the reign of Krishna Deva Raya. As the Tamil powers refused to accept his supremacy and to pay tribute, he sent a powerful army under the command of three generals, Vaiyappa Nayaka, Vijayaraghava Nayaka and Venkatappa Nayaka to the deep South in 1520-1521. The expedition advanced to Vellore and from there to Senji. The defiant powers submitted and agreed to pay tribute. Determined to maintain his authority, he reorganised the administration on the basis of the Nayankara System. He divided the land of the Tamils into three nayakships-Senji under Vaiyappa Nayaka, Thanjavur under Vijayaraghava Nayaka and Madurai under Venkatappa Nayaka. Senji extended from Nellore to Kollidam and included Vellore. Thanjavur comprised the Kaveri delta. Madurai extended from the Kaveri to Kanyakumari.[5] The Tamil Country came to be divided among these powers.

Rise of the Nayaks of Senji

Senji, otherwise called Jinji, was one of the military strong holds in Tondaimandalam. According to tradition in the year 1442 one Vijayaranga Nayaka built the fort upon an

4. N. Venkataramanayya, *Studies in the Third Dynasty of Vijayanagar*, Madras, 1935, pp. 170-171.
5. Taylor, *Catalogue Raisonne*, Vol. 3, p. 39.

old Chola foundation. Because of its strategic location, it grew into an important post and Krishna Deva Raya made it the headquarters of the province, with Vaiyappa Nayaka as the administrator. This marked the rise of the first nayak kingdom in the Tamil Country.

For want of adequate evidences, it is not possible to find out when the nayakship was established and who were the nayaks in the order of succession. Epigraphical sources indicate that Vaiyappa Nayaka ruled from 1526 A. D. and hence this year must be taken as the beginning of the Nayakship o Senji. However scholars do not agree on the question whether he continued to rule or not. C.S. Srinivasachari is of the view that Vaiyappa Nayaka, after consolidating his conquests, entrusted the administration of Senji with his associate, Tubaki Krishnappa Nayaka and returned to the imperial capital. Therefore he considers Tubaki as the real founder of the Senji line of Nayaks.[6] But A. Krishnaswami on the basis of inscriptional evidences has rejected this theory. The inscriptions found at Jambai in South Arcot district and Kalahagunta in Chittoor district suggest that Vaiyappa Nayaka continued to make donations to temples and build *agraharas* for the Brahmins upto 1541 A.D. Hence it is reasonable to believe that he continued to administer the country upto this period or beyond. A contemporary of Krishna Deva Raya and Achyuta Raya, he remained loyal to the imperial authority and contributed to the consolidation of Telugu hegemony over the Tamil Country.

The successor of Vaiyappa is mentioned as Pedda Krishnappa in the inscription of the period, as Tubaki Krishnappa in *Mackenzie Manuscripts* and simply as Krishnappa in the ballad on the history of Senji. As Tubaki and Pedda are mere prefixes, Krishnaswami assumes that both of them refer to Tubaki Krishnappa Nayaka.[7] The sucessors of this ruler are listed differently in different records. The *Mackenzie Manuscripts* give

6 C. S. Srinivasachari, *A History of Gingee and its Rulers*, p. 81.

their names as Ramachandra Nayaka, Muthialu Nayaka and Venkatappa Nayaka, who was also called as Krishnappa Nayaka II (1570-1600). These early rulers of Senji strengthened the fortifications, improved the temples patronised learning and consolidated their conquests.[8]

Early Nayaks of Thanjavur

The Nayakship of Thanjavur came into existence by the year 1532 A.D. The Telugu works, *Thanjavuri Andhra Rajalu Charitra* and *the Thanjavuri Vari Charitra* make it clear that Sevappa Nayaka obtained possession of the Chola country by about 1502 as his dowry, for he married the sister of one of the queens of Emperor Achyuta Raya of Vijayanagar. Sevappa Nayaka thus became the founder of the Nayak line of Thanjavur. His territory included Thanjavur and part of the present day district of South Arcot. Tiruchirapalli formed part of his province but he exchanged it with Madurai for gaining possession of Vallam, perhaps with imperial sanction.[9] He assisted the Emperor in the wars against the Portuguese and the Rajah of Travancore and subsequently against the Bahmini powers in the battle at Talikota. As the other Hindu rulers of the times did, Sevappa Nayaka too made gifts to temples, built *agraharams* and provided for the free feeding of Brahmins.

In 1580 Achyutappa Nayaka (1580–1614) succeeded his father, Sevappa Nayaka, to the throne. Despite the defeat that Vijayanagar suffered in the Battle of Talikota in 1565, Thanjavur continued to remain loyal to the Empire and to pay tribute. The Pudukkottai Plate dated Saka 1505 indicates that Achyutappa supported Vijayanagar in defeating the forces of Madurai in the Battle of Vallamprakara (Vallam). This led to bitter rivalry between the two nayak powers—Thanjavur and Madurai. In a war with the Portuguese he supported the ruler of Jaffna, but the latter was defeated and forced to seek refuge in Thanjavur. After this humiliation he devoted him-

7. A. Krishnaswami, *The Tamil Country Under Vijayanagar*, pp. 246-252.
8. C. S. Srinivasachari, *A History of Gingee and its Rulers*, p. 81.
9. Taylor, *Oriental Historical Manuscripts*, vol 2, p. 109.

self to religious pursuits. At the expense of the Tamil peasants he too founded *agraharas* and made gifts to the Brahmins. It is pointed out that he instituted free feeding to a thousand Brahmins every day. Inspite of his attempt to win the favour of gods through the Brahmins, his reign was marked by repeated wars and disorders. He died in 1614, being succeeded by his son, Raghunatha Nayaka.[10]

The Early Nayaks of Madurai

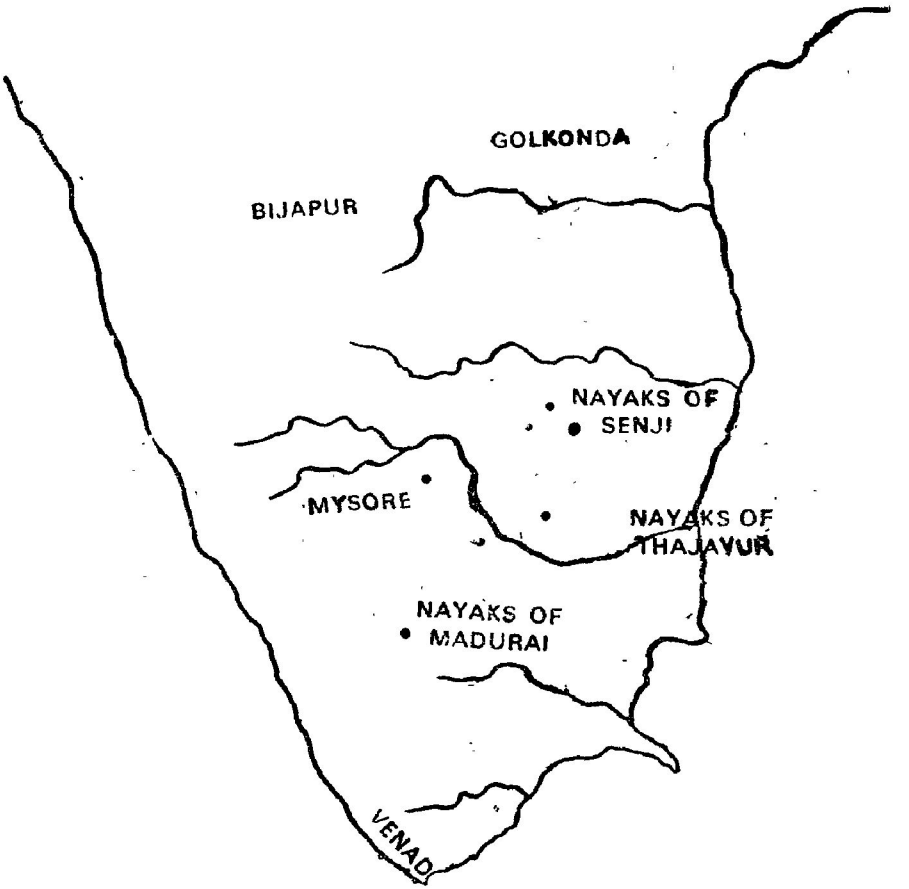
It is believed that Emperor Krishna Deva Raya in the last year of his reign, (1529—1530) organisedt he Nayakship of Madurai. Beginning with Visvanatha Nayaka (1529—1564,) Madurai experienced the rule of numerous nayaks. The pattern that is perceptible in their administration, as in case of other Nayaks, was that they squandered away the resources that they mobilized through oppression and exaction on concubines, priests and troops. They maintained large harems, fed Brahmins, kept armies but neglected the people. In their early years they fought frequent wars and in their later years they made gifts to the rich. They spent the evening of their lives in regret and ultimately died in anguish.

Visvanatha Nayaka fought a series of wars against the Tamil powers. Ariyanatha Mudali, who betrayed the cause of the Tamils, ably assisted his Telugu master in his wars against the Pancha Pandyas of Tirunelveli and in the reduction of the local powers to submission. Krishnappa Nayaka I (1564-1572) succeeded his father Visvanatha to power. He sent an army under Ariyanatha Mudali to the aid of the Empire against the Muslim powers of the Deccan, but it fled during the Battle of Talikota. There followed several other Nayaks in the line. They were Virappa Nayaka (1572-1595), Krishnappa Nayaka II (1595—1601), Muthu Krishna Nayaka (1601—1609) and Muthu Virappa Nayaka I (1609—1623). As usual their administration was marked by wars and conflicts as well as donations and gifts; it was not of any importance from the point of view of

10. F. C. Danvers *The Portuguese in India*, London, 1894, vol. 2, p. 76.

the common people, except for the troubles it heaped on them. Muthu Krishnappa reorganised the administration of Ramanathapuram with Sadaika Tevar as the Setupati in view of his failure to establish order in the Marava Country. The next ruler Muthu Virappa shifted his capital from Madurai to Tiruchirapalli as he felt it essential to carry on war against Thanjavur. But the Rajah of Mysore took advantage of this conflict for advancing the frontiers of his territory to the Tamil Country.

Telugu Powers in Tamil Nadu



Chapter II

THE THREE NAYAKS

Because of the inadequacy of source material, it is not possible to form a critical assessment of the character and work of the Nayak rulers of Tamil Nadu. In history it so happens that many a great hero has passed into oblivion, unsung or unwept. The available sources of information indicate that the Nayak dynasties produced a few prominent rulers. Among them were: Krishnappa Nayaka II of Senji, Raghunatha Nayaka of Thanjavur and Tirumala Nayaka of Madurai. By their times the Vijayanagar Empire declined and they wielded independent authority in their respective territories.

Krishnappa Nayaka II

Krishnappa Nayaka II (1570-1601), considered as the most powerful of the Nayaks of Senji, was the grandson of Krishnappa Nayaka I and son of Kondama Nayaka. Mentioned as Venkatappa Nayaka in inscriptions and as Krishnappa Nayaka or Muthukrishnappa in the Jesuit letters and Telugu literature he was contemporary of Emperor Venkata I of Vijayanagar and of Raghunatha Nayaka of Thanjavur. A Jesuit letter dated 1606 tells of him as the most powerful of the Nayak rulers of the Tamil Country; for it reads: "He of Senji was the most powerful and he had divided his dominions among smaller Nayaks. The rulers at Vellore, Tiruvati and Devakota were his feudatories."[1] Though Krishnappa II was a powerful prince, he did not leave behind many inscriptions on his reign. However, the Jesuits had recorded their impressions about his policy and country in their letters.

Krishnappa is depicted as a liberal ruler, who built towns for the settlement of people, promoted cultivation, granted toleration to all religions and maintained a powerful army. He

1. M. Heras, *The Aravidu Dynasty*, Madras, 1917, p. 407.

erected the town of Krishnapatam on bank of river Vellar and invited the followers of different religions to settle there. As a man of catholic views, he gave gifts to the Jesuits for building a church, permitted the Jains to erect a shrine at Sittanur and allowed the Saivites to construct a temple at Tindivanam. Yet he was an orthodox Vaishnavite, for he patronised Vaishnavism and the Vaishnavite scholar, Tirumala Tatacharya.

Father Pimenta of the Jesuit Mission on his way from Cochin to San Thome visited the Nayak country, covering the distance on foot. He found Senji as the greatest city that he had seen in India, bigger than any in Portugal, except Lisbon. However he had described Chidambaram as the mother city of superstitions, because of the rites and ceremonies that were performed day after day. Granted audience by the ruler at Chidambaram and Senji, he had recorded his impressions. For, he wrote : the Nayak" commanded that we should be brought to his presence. Before us 200 Brahmins went in rank to springle the house with holy water and to prevent sorcey against the King". He saw the Nayak sitting on a silk carpet leaning on two cushions, wearing a long golden chain. At Senji he saw the fort and a castle, which were formed into bulwarks and turrets and made impregnable.

It was during this period that the Portuguese and the Dutch entered into a keen rivalry for the control of trade in the Tamil Country. Krishnappa Nayaka made a grant to the Dutch, permitting them to establish a factory at Cuddalore, which in subsequent times passed under the control of the English as Fort St. David. However as the result of the machinations of the Portuguese in the court of Emperor Venkata I, the imperial forces expelled them from the country. A few years later the Dutch returned in strength and obtained rights from the Emperor and the Nayaks for establishing factories at Tirupapuliyur and Pulicat.[2]

Taking advantage of the disintegration of Vijayanagar

2. A. Krishnaswami, *The Tamil Country Under Vijayanagar*, pp. 280-283.

Empire, Krishnappa Nayaka sought to assert his independence. Because of the aggressions committed by Bijapur and Golkonda Venkata I was preoccupied with the defence of the northern frontiers. Eager to strengthen his position, the Emperor sought to assert his influence over Vellore, which was ruled by a local nayak but belonging to Senji. In 1604 he proceeded with the occupation of this strong fort. Greatly offended, the Nayak in his turn withheld payment of tribute. Thereupon the imperial forces commanded by Yachamma Nayak besieged the Fort of Senji. Had Krishnappa Nayaka entrenched himself within the fort, the besieging army would have found the task insuperable. But carried away by over confidence, the Nayak marched out of the Fort and fought a pitched battle. As a result he was easily defeated and imprisoned. Krishnappa paid a huge ransom and saved his life through the intervention of the queen of Venkata. This humiliation made him so disappointed that he offered to abdicate and to lead a retired life at Srirangam.[3] At this juncture the Nayaks of Thanjavur and Madurai used their influence with the Emperor for the release of the royal prisoner. *Raghunathabyudayam* tells that at the instance of Raghunatha Nayaka of Thanjavur, the Emperor released Krishnappa Nayaka and reinstalled him. Yet the possibility was that he was reinstated as a nominal ruler.

It is not possible to ascertain when this battle at Senji was fought. The Jesuit letters indicate that even by 1600 there was adequate justification for the Emperor to take action against Senji as the Nayak withheld payment of tribute. Still he did not venture into it, as there was reason to believe that the Nayak fell under the influence of poison, administered to him by some treacherous noble. By 1604 he recovered and sent an embassy to Venkata I. Further in the Jesuit letter written in 1606 it is mentioned that among the three nayakships, Senji was the most powerful. Therefore it should be concluded that Krishnappa Nayaka was defeated and imprisoned

3. C. S. Srinivasachari, *A History of Gingee and Its Rulers*, Annamalai nagar, 1943, pp. 91-120.

at a later time, perhaps by the year 1607. Though the Nayak was allowed to return to his country, Senji lost its place as a powerful principality.

During the imprisonment of Krishnappa the Vijayanagar general Venkata administered Senji. He dug out a large tank, called Chennasagaram for promoting irrigation. It was from his descendants, Venkatappa of Vandavasi and Ayyappa of Poonamalle, that the English acquired possession of Madraspatnam. The successors of Krishnappa Nayaka were Varadappa Nayaka and Ayyappa Nayaka. The forces of Bijapur defeated the last ruler and occupied Senji in 1649.[4]

Raghunatha Nayaka

Raghunatha Nayaka (1600-1634), a contemporary of Krishnappa II of Senji, was the most powerful among the Nayaks of Thanjavur. He served as *yuvaraja* during the reign of his father Achyutapa Nayaka and gained experience both as a soldier and as an administrator. Directed by his father, he led the forces for the defence of Penukonda, which was by then besieged by the Deccani forces and saved the city for Vijayanagar. In return for this signal service, Emperor Venkata I complied with his request for the release of Krishnappa Nayaka II of Senji from prison. In 1600 he ascended the throne. The Portuguese letters refer to the story that he murdered his brother and obtained possession of the country. However there is no reference in any other source for substantiating this version.

Raghunatha Nayaka distinguished himself as an able general and sagacious ruler. His early wars were fought in defence of the Empire. Due to his loyalty to Venkata I, he fought against the forces of Golkonda, which committed aggression upon Vijayanagar and against the forces of Madurai in the battle of Topur. The victories that he gained in these battles made him the most powerful feudatory in Vijayanagar.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 157-158.

He also led an expedition against Solaga of the coastal area and against the Portuguese in Jaffna. It is believed that Solaga was the ruler of a territory, situated north of the river, Kollidam. Supported by the Nayak of Senji, he created disturbances in Thanjavur. In consequence the forces of Raghunatha Nayaka equiped with bows, arrows and swords and carrying with them medicinal herbs, attacked the rebel stronghold. Solaga surrendered and Krishnappa Nayak of Senji who came to his support, retreated in humiliation.

The forces of Thanjavur fought against the Portuguese in Ceylon. The ruler of Jaffna, being defeated and expelled from his kingdom by the Portuguese sought the support of the Nayak of Thanjavur. Accordingly, from Devakottai Raghunatha Nayaka advanced with his army along the sea coast, crossed the Gulf of Mannar by a chain of boats, attacked and defeated the Portuguese and reinstated the king of Jaffna. However, this victory proved momentary, for the Portuguese returned in strength and re-occupied Jaffna. The forces of Thanjavur that reached again in support of Jaffna suffered a defeat and retreated.

The reign of Raghunatha Nayaka witnessed an expansion of overseas trade and a keen competition among European merchants for ascendancy in the eastern market. Because of intrigues and repression the local powers sought to expel the Portuguese and often sided with the Dutch. From Raghunatha Nayaka the Dutch acquired Tegnapatam by 1610 A. D. They sought to erect a fort at Trimilipatam, situated between Tarangambadi and Nagapatam but the Nayak refused permission for fear of inviting complications in his relations with the foreign powers. The conflict between the two European powers badly affected the growth of their trade. The English wrote: "the Dutch worked havoc to the Portuguese ships in the sea but on land the latter endeavoured by clandestine efforts to prevent the Dutch from getting a foot hold". Raghunatha Nayaka permitted the Danes too to establish a settlement in his country. In 1620 they founded Danesborg

at Tarangambadi. By 1622 they built a fort at this place and captured a large volume of trade. The success gained by the Danes prompted the English to seek a foot hold in the kingdom. Attracted by the good and cheap cloth, painted in different colours and believing that this coast produced plenty of pepper, they wanted to open a factory at Karaikal. But by experience they found the Nayak "very covetous expecting very great presents yearly". Also pepper was not available in any large quantity. Because of these considerations and Portuguese intrigues, they abandoned their attempt. Nevertheless, it appears that Raghunatha Nayaka encouraged the different European powers to have a share of the country's trade with a view to keeping them in mutual competition and safeguarding his interests thereby.

It appears that the last years of Raghunatha Nayaka were marked by peace and order in the kingdom. Men of letters lived in his court and sought royal favours. Yagnanarayana Dikshita singing in praise of his reign wrote: 'poverty left the country and Thanjavur became the abode of Lakshmi'. However, this depiction would have represented an attempt to conceal the truth and flatter the ruler, for with an oppressive taxation prevailing in the kingdom it is difficult to give credence to this statement. Yet it cannot be denied that the weakness of the rulers for flattery and the unscrupulousness of the poets in their ability to excel in this art have always contributed to the growth of literature and the suppression of reason. No wonder, the court of Raghunatha Nayaka was not an exception. The ruler convened *pandita parishads* or assemblies of scholars in which learned men and women competed against each other not only to exhibit their intellectual attainments but also in showering encomium upon the king. Incidentally this helped Thanjavur to become a seat of learning. The southern school of Telugu literature, which was noted for its contribution to the *yakshagana* type of drama, had emerged during this period. Sanskrit too received encouragement but Tamil was neglected. As the other Nayaks did, Raghunatha Nayaka too made large gifts

to the Brahmins at the expense of the defeated Tamils. Govinda Dikshita, who served his father as priest and minister, continued to hold these posts under him. Both the king and his minister diverted the resources of the state for the promotion of their religion rather than of the welfare of their subjects.

On the death of Raghunatha Nayaka, his son Vijayaraghava, succeeded to the throne. Despite the preoccupation of Vijayanagar with the wars against the Deccani powers, he remained loyal to the Emperors, Venkatapati II and Sriranga III. He neglected the welfare of his people and spent his time in constant worship. Greatly encouraged, the forces of Bijapur and Madurai ravaged the country, as the result of which the inhabitants suffered terribly. Ultimately the Nayak himself died in a battle, fought against the Madurai army. The last ruler of the dynasty was Chengamaladas, from whom the Marathas usurped the throne.[5]

Thirumala Nayaka

Tirumala Nayaka (1625-1659) succeeded his younger brother, Muthu Virappa Nayaka as the ruler of Madurai. Bertrand, who edited the Jesuit letters, considers him as the most prominent of the Nayak kings of Madurai.[6] However, a few historians have condemned him on the ground that his foreign policy was short sighted, though they have given credit for what he did for his people in Madurai. It cannot be denied that during his rule Madurai reached the zenith of its glory but at the same time entered the road to eclipse.

Tirumala Nayaka succeeded to the throne at a critical time in the history of Madurai. The Vijayanagar Empire was fast declining and the forces of Bijapur and Golkonda were becoming increasingly aggressive. The Nayaks of Thanjavur

5. V. Vriddhagirisan, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, Annamalainagar, 1942, pp. 62-104.

6 Bertrand, *La Mission du Madure*, Paris, 1850, Vol. II, p. 124.

adopted a hostile policy, while the Wodayars of Mysore threatened the northern provinces. In the east the Setupati of Ramanathapuram and in the west the rulers of Kerala had become restive. Under these circumstances, Tirumala Nayaka found it no more necessary to drain the resources of his country for paying one third to one half of his revenue as tribute to the Emperor. Also money was needed to counter the menacing odds. Therefore, as a prudent prince, he withheld payment of tribute to the Emperor and gained for Madurai an independent status. As Tiruchirapalli appeared much exposed to the invaders from the north, he shifted his capital to Madurai. He constructed forts on the northern frontier and raised an army of 30,000 men. In fact the assertion of independence represented the logical culmination of the trends at work.[7]

During the early years of his reign he had to fight a series of wars against the local powers. Chamaraja Wodayar, the ambitious ruler of Mysore, coveted the possession of Salem and other territories in the north-west. His army led by Harasura Nandi Raja advanced as far as Dindigul. But the Nayak forces, assisted by the Poligar of Kannivadi, defeated and drove back the invaders. By 1635 the Madurai army fought against the forces of Travancore, as Unni Kerala Varma, the ruler of this state, refused the payment of tribute. Tirumala Nayaka invaded Nanchinadu and raided the villages, but it is not certain whether the tribute was collected. In the Marava Country of Ramanathapuram there broke out a civil war. On the death of Kuttan Setupati (1623-1635), his son Sadaika Tevar II became the ruler. As he withheld payment of tribute, Tirumala supported the Setupati's brother Thambi, who contested the throne. The Nayak army led by Ramappaiyan marched to Ramanathapuram, but the Setupati escaped to Rameswaram. The invading forces constructed a causeway, moved to the island and took Sadaika Tevar a prisoner. In this war the Portuguese ably supported the Nayaks, while the Dutch the

7. R. Satyanatha Iyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, p. 119.

Maravas. In return for their assistance Tirumala Nayaka permitted the Portuguese to propagate Christianity, to build churches and to occupy a fort.[8] The ballad *Ramappayyan Ammanai* portrays the story of the expedition and the heroic exploits of the Maravas led by Vanni. However, when the Setupati was imprisoned, the people rose in rebellion. Unable to control the situation, Tirumala sent back Sadaika Tevar to his country, but before long he was killed by his rebel brother. Thereupon the Nayak divided the Marava Country among Thambi and his brothers, Raghunatha Tevar and Tanaka Tevar. On the death of his two brothers, Raghunatha Tevar became the Setupati of entire Ramanathapuram.[9]

Tirumala Nayaka supported Vijayanagar against the Muslim powers. However as Emperor Sriranga III decided to suppress Madurai because of the refusal of tribute, Tirumala won the support of Golkonda and saved his kingdom. Now, Bijapur made a settlement with Golkonda, conquered Senji, subdued Thanjavur and threatened Madurai. Confronted with this unexpected situation, Tirumala won the support of the Kallar tribes and routed the invading forces of Bijapur. When this difficulty was overcome, he found a hostile combination of Vijayanagar and Mysore against Madurai. Thereupon he won the alliance of Bijapur and forced Sriranga III to flee to Bednore. In retaliation Kathirava Narasa Rajah of Mysore, who was allied to the Emperor, assembled a large army, invaded Satyamangalam and advanced to Madurai in 1656. The Mysore army massacred the people and cut off the noses of the captives. At this critical moment Tirumala Nayaka appealed to Setupati Raghunatha Tevar for help. The combined forces of Madurai and Ramanathapuram fought a fierce battle near Dindigul against the Mysore army and won a great victory. Each side lost about 12,000 men. The victorious army persued the retreating forces and ravaged Mysore. This decisive victory saved Madurai from the threat of total extinction.

8. F. C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. II, p. 268.
9. R. Sathyanatha Iyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, pp. 120-122.

Historians have passed contradictory verdicts on the foreign policy of Tirumala Nayaka. Rangachari has condemned him as a traitor of blackset dye on ground that by his alliances with the Muslim powers the Nayak betrayed his religion and his country. He proceeds to remark that in the end not only he became a slave but made the other Hindu rulers also slaves of the despised *Mlechcha*.[10] On the other hand Sathyanatha Iyer has adored the policy of this Nayak ruler. He tells that Madurai gained no benefit in remaining loyal to an Empire which had become powerless to defend Madurai against foreign aggression. In fact because of his intrigues the Emperor had become no much a suspect as the Deccani powers were, that Tirumala Nayaka found no alternative but to act in accordance with what the situation warranted.[11] True that opportunism rather than principle had its way, yet it cannot be denied that through his alliance systems Tirumala contributed to the fall of Vijayanagar and invited the hostility of other Hindu powers.

Despite his constant wars, Tirumala Nayaka gave security to his people and maintained order in the Madurai Country. He kept his kingdom intact against formidable odds and frequently toured the provinces in the interest of promoting an efficient administration. Art, architecture and religion received his encouragement. He built pagodas, choultries, gopuras and palaces in Madurai, but these works were undertaken with the enforced labour on enslaved Tamils. The Mahal, that he erected, remains as a monument of the Telugu rule. Though much importance was given for the erection of palaces and forts, no attempt was made to imporve the lot of the common people. True that he dug a canal from Vaigai to Koothiyarkundu, but it was intended for the benefit of a large establishment of concubines that he had, and not for the peasants. He extended his patronage to Hinduism but it does not appear that he gave equal protection to other religions. The Jesuit

10. *Indian Antiquary*, Bombay, 1914, vol. 43, pp. 186 and 199.
11. R. Satyanatha Iyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, pp. 126-135.

letters tell of the hardships experienced by de Nobili, the Catholic missionary, in preaching Christianity because of the hostile attitude of the officials and chieftains. In consequence he was compelled to leave Madurai for Sendamangalam. Though there was persecution, Christianity continued to spread. Foreign trade passed under the control of the European powers. Tirumala Nayaka supported the Portuguese against the Dutch in their mutual rivalry. In retaliation the Dutch captured the Temple of Tiruchendur and occupied from the Portuguese the port of Tutukudi in 1658. This gave a blow to the prestige of the Nayaks.[12]

The successors of Tirumala Nayaka were Muthu Virappa Nayaka II, Chokkanatha Nayaka and Muthu Virappa Nayaka III. Their rule was a period of wars and disorders. Chokkanatha occupied Thanjavur but in his wars against Mysore and the Maravas, he suffered reverses. The period that followed was marked by a steady decline of the Nayaks. Chanda Sahib deposed the last ruler, queen Minakshi and occupied the kingdom. The Nayaks escaped to Sivaganga, where they languished and vanished.

12. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. II, pp. 293-294.

DECLINE OF NAYAK POWERS

In 1565 the combined forces of the Bahmini Sultanates of Bijapur, Golkonda, Ahmadnagar and Bidar defeated the army of Vijayanagar Empire in a decisive battle at Talikota. The Nayak powers of the Tamil Country, which sent their forces for the aid of the Empire, shared in the defeat. This gave a serious blow to the prestige of the Empire and quickened the process of disintegration. Rama Raya, who commanded the imperial army, died in battle. Tirumala and Venkatadri, his brothers, escaped death and fled to safety. They shifted the capital from Vijayanagar to Penukonda. 1570 Tirumala deposed Emperor Sadasiva Raya and founded the rule of his house, the Aravidu Dynasty. To this line of rulers belonged Tirumala (1570-1571), Sri Ranga I (1572-1585), Venkata (1585-1614), Sriranga II (1615) and Sriranga III (1642-1672). The history of the Aravidu Dynasty was marked by constant wars in South India. Bijapur and Golkonda extened their conquests to the deep South, while the Telugu powers of the Tamil Country asserted a status of independence. The Empire fought constant wars against external and internal powers until it made its exit from the scene of history. These developments had their decisive impact upon the fortunes of the Telugu powers in the Tamil Country.

Civil War

During the post-Talikota period there emerged two trends in the history of the far South-the determinded effort of the Bahmini powers to extend their conquests and the desperate bid of the remnant Vijayanagar to strengthen its authority over the Nayak powers. These endeavours made by the rival powers, after certain initial victories, failed ultimately. Frequently, Bijapur and Golkonda fought against each other yet they kept the goal of total extinction of Vijayanagar in their constant view. The Nayaks too fought against each

other and also against the Emperor, thereby greatly contributing to their own extinction.

Emperor Tirumala, seeking to rehabilitate the dilapidated Empire, reorganised the administrative system. He divided the Empire into three provinces. The Telugu Country with its headquarters at Udayagiri was placed in charge of his son Sriranga, the Kannada Country with Srirangapatnam as headquarters in charge of another son Rama and the Tamil Country with Chandragiri as headquarters in charge of his third son Venkata I. Tirumala was succeeded by Sriranga I and Venkata I. They fought against the Nayaks as well as the Bahmini powers. Venkata I, an able ruler, defeated the Nayaks of Senji and Madurai with the support of Thanjavur. In 1604 he shifted his capital to Chandragiri and in consequence of which the centre of political activity moved to the Tamil Country.[1]

What brought about a tragic turn in the history of Vijayanagar was the outbreak of a civil war. Though Venkata had six legalised wives, he failed to have a male child. One of his ambitious but deceitful queens adopted a baby from a servant maid and passed it off as her own son. The boy grew up and married the daughter of Jaggaraya, the brother of this queen. The Emperor, however, before his death in 1614 nominated Sriranga, the son of his elder brother Rama, as his successor. Accordingly the prince was crowned as Sriranga II. This marked the beginning of a civil war, which shook the Empire to its foundations.

Jaggaraya, supported by the Nayaks of Senji and Madurai, upheld the cause of his son-in-law. Yachama Nayaka, another influential chief, supported by the Nayak of Thanjavur, took up the cause of Sriranga II. The civil war began when Jaggaraya put to death the members of the royal family, including the Emperor in the imperial palace. Yachama Nayaka,

1 A. Krishnaswami, *The Tamil Country under Vijayanagar*, pp. 270-272.

however, managed to rescue Rama, son of Sriranga II. The civil war continued for two years, culminating in a great battle fought in 1616 at Toppur, the modern Tohur, situated near Tiruchirapalli on bank of the Kaveri. Yachama Nayaka defeated and killed Jaggaraya and crowned prince Rama as Emperor Ramadeva Raya in 1617. Incidentally this marked a victory for Thanjavur over the two rival powers, Madurai and Senji, which supported Jaggaraya. Yet the evil days of the Empire did not end. Yatiraya, brother of Jaggaraya, made peace with Ramadeva Raya, gave him his daughter in marriage and acquired a status of influence. There followed a keen rivalry between Yachama Nayaka and Yatiraya, in consequence of which the Empire again plunged into disorder.

Fall of the Nayaks of Senji

As early as in 1573 Bijapur and Golkonda entered into an agreement with each other, aimed at the partition of the Vijayanagar Empire between them. Bijapur was to have the plateau region covering the major part of Mysore and the central region of the Tamil Country, while Golkonda was to have the eastern region below the Ghats extending to Senji.[2] In accordance with this well concerted plan of aggression the two powers made repeated attempts at a thrust southward but Emperor Venkata managed to check their progress. In subsequent times the civil war in the Empire presented an opportunity to the northern powers. In 1642 the two powers resumed aggression. The forces of Golkonda occupied Udayagiri and wrested control of the Telugu Country. Thereupon Emperor Sriranga III won over Bijapur in return for a payment of fifteen lakhs of pogodas and reoccupied Udayagiri. Gaining a new confidence in his strength the Emperor decided to assert his sovereignty on the Nayak powers. The Jesuit letters indicate that Tirumala Nayaka, unable to tolerate the overbearing attitude of the Emperor, formed a secret alliance with Thanjavur and Senji. However, Vijayaraghava, the ruler

2. S. K. Ayyangar, *The Rise of the Maratha Powers, Journal of Indian History* Vol IV pp. 176-177.

of Thanjavur, betrayed his allies and revealed the plan of the confederates to the Emperor. Assisted by Thanjavur and other feudatories, Sriranga marched against Senji in 1645.[3] A letter written in October 1645 reads: the Emperor brought all his great lords under his command which had not been so for forty years before. Supported by the feudal powers, the imperial army ravaged the Nayak country and defeated the forces of Senji and Madurai. At this critical moment Madurai and Senji appealed to Golkonda and Bijapur for aid.[4] This gave a welcome opportunity to the Bahmini powers to march against Vijayanagar.

In response to this appeal and eager to fish in troubled waters Golkonda sent an army under Mir Jumla, while Bijapur sent an army under Mustafa Khan. In 1646 Mir Jumla advanced rapidly southwards along the coast. Pulicat held by the Dutch and Poonamallee, Kanchipuram and Chengalpattu held by different nayaks surrendered to the advancing forces. Sriranga III abandoning his campaign against the nayaks rushed to the north, but was defeated and forced to pay a huge indemnity to Mustafa Khan. Returning to the south, he sought an alliance with Madurai, but mutual jealousies and old suspicions prevented them from forging unity. Sriranga III fled to Mysore. Vellore passed under the control of Golkonda. After this victory the forces of Golkonda threatened the three Nayak kingdoms of Senji, Thanjavur and Madurai.[5]

In 1648 Mir Jumla led the force of Golkonda against Senji. Now Tirumala Nayaka of Madurai gained the support of Bijapur against Golkonda. The combined forces of Madurai and Bijapur and led by Khan-i-Khanan marched for the rescue of Senji. However Mir Jumla, seeing a fellow Muslim in command of an army marching against him, made a settle-

3. W. Foster, *The English Factories in India*, Oxford, 1913, p. 289
4. A. Krishnaswamy, *The Tamil Country under Vijayanagar*, pp. 351-353.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 357-358.

ment by which he left the forces of Bijapur in control of the situation and himself retired to Cuddapah. The army of Bijapur took possession of Vellore and besieged Senji and occupied it by the end of the year 1649.[6] This marked the extinction of the Nayak kingdom of Senji. The Persian work *Basatin i Salatin* tells of Rup Nayak, the ruler of Senji, as very proud and wealthy but because of his licentious and luxurious habits, neglected the affairs of his kingdom and invited disaster. In fact the fall of Senji was due as much to the weakness of the ruler and his poor strategy as it was the treachery of Mustafa Khan and blunder of Tirumala Nayaka.

The fall of Senji was of great consequence. It weakened the influence of the Telugus and strengthened Bijapur. The forces of Bijapur gained possession of a strategic fort and a rich territory. They looted the city and took away the accumulated riches of the ruler, which amounted to twenty crores of rupees in cash and an enormous quantity of gold and jewels.[7] They carried on the work of desolation so relentlessly that they left the country in ruins. In his letter to Paul Oliva the Jesuit missionary, Andrew Friere, wrote in 1666: "Nothing can equal the cruelties which the Muhammadans employ in the Government of Gingee. Expression fails me to recount the atrocities which I have seen with my own eyes". With the booty collected, the Sultan of Bijapur erected mosques and promoted conversion to Muslim faith. The *Basatin-i-Salatin* adds: "The country which had nothing but idol worship and infidelity for thousands of centuries are illuminated with the light of Islam through the endeavours and good wishes of the king". From Senji the forces of Bijapur marched to the deep South ravaged Thanjavur and Madurai and forced them to submit.[8] Thevenot remarks: "the king of Golkonda siezed those dominions which lay conveniently for him the king of Bijapur, having taken what lay next to him, pursued his conquest as far the Cape of Negapatam".[9]

6. J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. I, p. 254.
7. Bertrand, *La Mission du Madure*, Vol. III, p. 47.
8. C. S. Srinivasachari, *A History of Gingee and its Rulers*, pp. 182-184.
9. Thevenot, *Travels*, Part III, pp. 91-105

Fall of the Nayaks of Thanjavur

Madurai and Thanjavur were the two southern-most Nayak kingdoms in Vijayanagar. Both were in Tamil Country, ruled by the Telugus, yet their mutual relation was marked by bitter rivlary. Related to the royal family of Vijayanagar, the Nayaks of Thanjavur wielded considerable influence in the Empire and extended their steady co-operation to the Emperors in times of war as well as in peace. Madurai on the other hand followed a policy of isolation and frequently withheld payment of tribute, seeking an independent status. Thus differences in their foreign policy together with territorial ambitions involved them in suicidal wars and sapped their resources. Ultimately they fell a prey to the northern powers.

In consequence of the defeat suffered by the imperial army in the battle at Talikota, Virappa Nayaka of Madurai withdrew his allegiance to the Emperor.[10] This daring move invited reprisal. The Pudukkottai Plates dated Saka 1505 refers to a battle at Vallam in which the forces of Vijayanagar, supported by Thanjavur, destroyed the Madurai army. In a later war too Achyutappa Nayaka of Thanjavur joined forces with the Empire against Madurai. In retaliation Muthu Virappa Nayaka of Madurai invaded Thanjavur but was forced to make peace. As Father Heras rightly stated: "This feud between the two houses that came to a head and burst in Venkata's reign continued unabated till the extinction of one of them."[11]

The rivalry between the two powers assumed a more serious dimension during the civil war in the Empire. Muthu Virappa Nayaka allied himself with Jaggaraya and invaded Thanjavur. Leon Besse wrote: "The Nayak of Madura removed his court and army to Trichinopoly in 1616 with the object of making war with the king of Tanjore"[12]. This war too ended in favour of Thanjavur, for in the Battle at Toppur the forces

10. S. K. Ayyangar, *The Nayaks of Madura*, Introduction, pp. 2-3.
11. Father Heras, *Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagar*, p. 360.
12. Leon Besse, *History of Madura Mission*, Trichinopoly, 1914, p. 3.

of Yachama Nayak supported by Thanjavur defeated the forces of Jaggaraya and Madurai. When Sriranga III marched against the Nayak powers, Tirumala Nayaka formed a united front with Thanjavur and Senji, but Thanjavur betrayed the cause of the allies and supported the Emperor. After the fall of Senji, which was allied to Madurai, Thanjavur co-operated with Bijapur in sending expeditions to the southern country. At the instance of Vijayaraghava Nayaka of Thanjavur, Adil Shah of Bijapur sent an army under Sagossi and Mulla to storm Tiruchirapalli. But Muthu Virappa, ruler of Madurai, strengthened his defences and foiled the bid. Thereupon the Bijapuris made a surprise attack on the forces of Thanjavur and occupied the towns of Thanjavur, Mannargudi and Vallam. Unable to remove his vast treasures to a secure place, Vijayaraghava deposited them at Vallam but the Kallans carried them off. Proenza rightly considers this as the happiest episode of this war, for 'these treasures which were the fruits of the greed of kings and the labour of the poor gave all the people an honest life'. The Muslims established their sway but their oppression caused death and destruction on a large scale. As the Bijapuris exposed themselves to the air of dead bodies, they fell victims to an epidemic. Famine and epidemic drove the invaders from Thanjavur, and Vijayaraghava returned to his capital.[13] Thereupon Chokkanatha Nayaka of Madurai considered it opportune to suppress the rival Nayak of Thanjavur in retaliation for betrayal

At the command of 70,000, troops Chokkanatha marched to Thanjavur. He made certain initial victories but because of wars with Mysore and the Maravas, he found it impossible to sustain the war. The Madurai army suffered reverses and retreated. Taking advantage of this turn to its fortune, Thanjavur supported by Bijapur, sent a large army commanded by Vanamian against Tiruchirapalli. As, the attempt made to storm this fort failed, the army ravaged the country, massacred the people and enslaved the captives. Compelled to prefer death to war, the people collected together

13. Bertrand, *La Mission du Madure*, Vol. III, p. 53.

in houses, set them on fire and perished. Finding it impossible to drive out the invaders, Chokkanatha gave a large bribe to Vanamian and secured his withdrawal. In 1673, however, Madurai resumed the war. A grand army commanded by Venkatakrishnappa captured Vallam and stormed Thanjavur. Vijayaraghava, the ruler of Thanjavur, set fire to his harem and himself died in battle. The success of Chokkanatha Nayaka eliminated from the scene a bitter rival and marked the fulfilment of a long cherished ambition. Yet this proved a momentary viciory, for Thanjavur revolted and asserted an independent status. Subsequently it passed under the control of the Marathas.

Disintegration of Madurai

The Madurai kingdom under Tirumala Nayaka embraced the major part of the Tamil Country. Extending from Kanyakumari to Kaveri, it included among other provinces Salem. Baramahal and Coimbatore (Sathyamangalam). The Marava and Travancore kingdoms were tributaries. However, this situation changed as aggression and internal disorders presented a threat to its territorial integrity. The Vijayanagar Empire made repeated attempts to suppress Madurai yet because of conflicts with Bijapur and Golkonda, it failed. After the extinction of the Empire, the country experienced threats from Mysore, Bijapur and Thanjavur. The frequent wars and extensive ravages exhausted its resources. At the same time the Nayaks alienated the Tamils too, for they reduced the latter to hard labour for erecting forts and palaces, drove them off from fertile lands and directed military operations against them.

Among the states that emerged on the ruins of Vijayanagar Empire, Mysore grew into a powerful kingdom. With the annexation of Channapatna with the consent of Emperor Venkata II, Chamaraja Wodayar of Mysore pushed the territorial limits of his kingdom and coveted possession of the provinces of Madurai.[14] Besides, in the wars between Vijaya-

14. C. K. Srinivasan, *Maratha Rule in Carnatic*, Annamalainagar, 1944, p. 23.

nagar and Bijapur, Mysore generally sided with the former, while Madurai with the latter. Naturally the two powers waited for opportunities for retaliation. These factors served as the general causes of the conflict between the two powers.

It was Devaraya Wodayar (1659—1672) who launched a policy of aggression against Madurai. His successor Chikkadeva Raya (1672-1704) persued this policy more vigorously. The situation appeared favourable, for Chokkanatha Nayaka, though an able soldier, was rash and short sighted. The constant wars that he waged against the nearby powers so much weakened his authority that his kingdom appeared vulnerable. By 1676 Chikkadeva Raya occupied Satyamangalam and consolidated his strength with the construction of military posts. In a battle at Erode he defeated the forces of Madurai. In 1690 he conquered a major part of Baramahal and Salem and extended his territory southward. An expedition led by Kumararaja, the general of Mysore, reached Tiruchirapalli, but was defeated and forced to retreat.[15] Yet during the regency of Mangammal (1689-1706) Chikkadeva Raya completed the conquest of Salem and Coimbatore. As a result Madurai lost a major part of its territory.

In the south west Raja Ravi Varma of Travancore and the Rani of Attingal withheld payment of tribute. The army that was sent by Rani Mangammal for collecting the arrears marched upto Kalkulam but was routed. Thereupon she sent an expedition under Narasappayyan about 1697 A.D. The Madurai army defeated the Raja and forced him to clear the arrears. The endeavour to collect the tribute from the Rani of Attingal failed as the Dutch took her off to safety in their ship.[16] In the north east the Marathas of Thanjavur occupied the border areas Therefore Narasappayan led an expedition against the Marathas and defeated King Shahji of Thanjavur but granted favourable terms in return for an alliance. The

15. R. Satyanatha Iyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, pp. 181-182.
16. Madras Council, Public Despatches to England, 1694, p. 126.

ruler of Mysore, determined to ruin Thanjavur and Madurai, erected a huge dam across the Kaveri. Madurai and Thanjavur now decided on a joint war on Mysore. But there came heavy rains, the dam collapsed and the river flooded the delta. This averted the war. These developments appeared as gains for Madurai, yet they kept the administration so pre-occupied that the Maravas found it possible to assert their independence.

Marava Resistance to Telugus

In the wake of Vijayanagara expansion the Nayaks asserted their authority and consolidated their influence in the far South. The Telugu powers subdued the Tamil kingdoms and reduced the inhabitants of the land to submission. There followed settlement in the Tamil Country of the Telugus, mostly Naidus, Reddis and Rajus, in wave after wave of migration. They replaced the Tamils in the military and administrative establishments of the country. Traditions in different villages indicate that they exterminated the male population in vast areas, enslaved women and occupied the fertile fields. For fear of extinction many of the inhabitants moved into the barren tracts. The subdued population was forced to serve their Telugu masters in the erection of mahals, forts and temples and to surrender to exaction as well as oppression.

The Jesuit records, the ballads like *Ramappaiyan Ammanai* and the works like *Nadar Mannarum Nayakka Mannarum* tell of the repeated struggles made by the Tamils to liberate the country from Telugu oppression. The Paravas won the support of the Portuguese and fought against the Nayaks but were overwhelmed. The Nadars rose in a series of rebellions but were suppressed. The Maravas on the other hand despite their shattering experiences carried on a heroic resistance until they regained their independence. In fact in a dark period in the history of the land they upheld the cause of Tamil culture and freedom.

Visvanatha Nayaka subdued the Pandyas but failed to extend his authority over the territories east of Madurai. The

Mackenzie Manuscripts refer to the Marava Country as remaining in a state of chaos and disorder.[17] In a bid to gain the allegiance of the people Muthu Krishnappa Nayaka of Madurai elevated a Marava chief, Sadaika Tever, as the Setupati. Kuttan Setupati succeeded him by 1623 A .D. These two princes exercised a status of semi independence, yet sent tribute to Madurai.

However, Sadaika Tevar II, who succeeded Kuttan Setupati by 1635 A.D. resented the overlordship of the Telugus. He rose in rebellion, refusing the payment of tribute. Thereupon, Tirumala Nayaka recognised Tambi, the half brother of Sadaikan, as the Setupati and sent Ramappayyan on an expedition to the east.[18] In this struggle the Nayaks won the alliance of the Portuguese, while the Maravas that of the Dutch.[19] Led by the indomitable Vanni the Maravas sought to check the march of the enemy at Ariyandipuram and Pohalurkottai but suffered reverses. Pursued by the Nayaks, the Setupati escaped to the island of Rameswaram. Vanni in a great battle fought at Pamban gained a victory but died of small pox soon afterwards. This tragedy so much disheartened the Maravas that they sued for peace.

Ramappayyan took Sadaikan as prisoner to Madurai but his attempt to assert the Nayak authority over the Marava Country excited further opposition. The people refused to accept Tambi as their ruler. Raghunatha Tevar now emerged as the leader of the resistance movement. Finding another expedition futile, Tirumala Nayaka restored the throne to Sadaikan. However Tambi murdered the Setupati.[20] Taking advantage of this opportunity, Tirumala Nayaka partitioned the Marava territory among three chieftains-Raghunatha Tevar,

17. Taylor, Old Historical Mss. ii Appendix, p. 49.
18. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 43, pp. 170-184.
19. F. C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, ii, p. 268.
20. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, (ed) Ramappaiyan Ammanai, Madras, 1951, pp. 40-67.

Tanakka Tevar and Tambi. However, as the latter princes died early, the country came to be unified. A sagacious but ruthless ruler, Raghunatha Tevar also known as the *Kilavan* (old) Setupati (1674-1710) suppressed the rebels and asserted his authority. After strenghtening his position, he extended his support to the Nayaks of Madurai and the Marathas of Thanjavur against foreign aggressions in an attempt to wrest advantages for himself. As he grew confident in his strength, he refused payment of tribute to the Telugus.[21]

As he defied the authority of Madurai, Rani Mangammal sent an army under Narasappayyan on another expedition to the Marava Country in 1702. But the Setupati formed an alliance with king Shaji of Thanjavur and defeated and Killed Narasappayyan. This victory enabled the Maravas to assert their independence. In return for this support, Ramanathapuram ceded Pattukkottai to Thanjavur. However in a war with the Marathas in 1709 the *Kilavan* Setupat defeated them and occupied Arantangi from Thanjavur. These victories gained for the Maravas an important status.

Despite these achievements what came as a blot upon the policy of *Kilavan* was his persecution of the Christians. At his orders his minister, Murugappa Pillai, executed the Jesuit missionary, John de Britto on February 4, 1693,[22] as the latter sought to convert one of the princes to his religion. The letter, that Father Britto wrote previous to execution, read: "I am expecting death with impatience; it has always been the object of my desire; it is now the most precious recompense to my work and sacrifice . . . All the crime I am charged with is the teaching of the law of true God and the weaning of the worshippers from their idols. The soldiers watch me. I cannot write more . . ."[23] This execution obtained for the country the crime of murdering a pious missionary. On the

21. John Bertrand, *La Mission du Madure*, Vol. IV, pp. 186-200.
22. R. Satyanatha Iyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, pp. 208-215.
23. John Bertrand, *La Mission du Madure*, Vol. III, p. 447.

death of *Kilavan* Setupati in 1710, his forty seven wives were compelled to commit suicide. As Father Martin reported, these innocent women after jumping into the fire pit, made frantic efforts to escape their doom. "Hurrying to and fro, struggling and fighting, tumbling one over the other, they vainly endeavoured to reach the edge of the pile, and filled the air the while with ear-piercing screams and groans". After they perished and after the fire extinguished itself, the Brahmins collected the charred bones and threw them into the sea at Rameswaram.[24]

On the death of *Kilavan* Setupati his son Vijayaraghunatha crowned himself as the ruler but an illegitimate son of *Kilavan* by name Bhavani Sankaran contested his brother's claims. Thanjavur and Pudukkottai extended their support to Bhavani Sankaran in the civil war. Upon the death of Vijayaraghunatha due to an epidemic, his nominee Tanda Tevar continued the war. The new ruler was supported by Madurai and Pudukkottai. He attacked Arantangi, the stronghold of the rebels, and drove Bhavani Sankaran to Thanjavur. By a settlement, Thanjavur agreed to extend further support to the defeated chief in return for his consent to cede the territory, situated north of the river Pambar. Accordingly the forces of Thanjavur defeated and killed Tanda Tevar, captured Ramanathapuram and enthroned Bhavani Sankaran. However as the new Setupati did not cede the promised territory, Thanjavur made an alliance with Kattaya Tevar, another rival, defeated and imprisoned Bhavani Sankaran. Kattaya Tevar now became Setupati and ceded his territory north of the Pambar to Thanjavur.[25] Madurai lost Ramanathapuram but because of internal disorders and external machinations the new principality of the Setupatis found itself thrown into the vortex of chaos. Yet the declining Telugus found it no more possible to regain their influence. The Maravas retained their independence until the British overran their land nearly a century later.

24. L. Besse, *Beschi. His Times and His Writings* Trichinopoly, 1918, pp. 25-29.

25. R. Sathyanatha Iyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, pp. 225-229.

Chapter IV

THE POLIGARI SYSTEM

The Nayak period witnessed the rise of a political order, called the poligari system. Similar in character to the nayankara system but of subordinate status, it was destined to have a chequered existence in the history of the Tamil Country. *Palayam* in Tamil and *palamu* in Telugu literally meant an armed camp. The holder of a *palayam* was the *palayakkaran* or the poligar. The duties of the poligars in regard to the payment of tribute to the sovereign, administration of justice in their districts and maintenance of troops for the service of the king corresponded with those of the feudal barons of medieval Euorpe, but differed considerably from those of the jagirdars and the zamindars of Moghul India. The possession of estates was indeed the basis of authority of all these chieftains. But while the primary duty of the jagirdar was to render military service to the sovereign, and that of a zamindar to pay rent, the poligar combined in himself both these functions. The concentration of these branches of duties together with the rights arising there from accounted for the vast influence of the poligars. In the Vijayanagara system what the nayaks of Madurai, Thanjavur and Senji were to the Emperor, the poligars were to the nayaks.

The rise of the poligari system is attributed to several sources. When the nayaks occupied the country, the ruling houses were deprived of their status. Those who surrendered and accepted their authority were accommodated into the poligari system. Also the nayaks wanted to settle the influential chieftains who migrated with them from the Telugu Country and reward the servants who distinguished themselves in their devoted service. Therefore they formed estates and assigned to them under the poligari tenure. As a result there came into existence several poligars. Among the important palayams were Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Wodayarpalayam,

Ariyalur and Panjalamkurichi.

Administration of Palayam

The poligar, irrespective of the extent and resources of his palayam, maintained a government of his own. He kept up the nominal officers of state, the principal of whom was called the *pradhan* or *dalaway*. On every important occasion he held a durbar. He conducted official communications with his sovereign and other rulers through accredited ministers, called *stanapatis*. The poligar functioned like a virtual king, for he collected taxes, presided over the distribution of justice, maintained order and kept his own troops.[1] He did certain economic functions too for he undertook charitable activities, cleared forests, executed irrigation works and built villages.[2] In short the poligar was the administrator of his palayam, commander of his forces, the renter of the ruler and a rvot among his people.

Like a feudal baron, the poligar preserved a part of his district, usually the best land, for his own cultivation and distributed the rest among the chief inhabitants, commonly called the *sherogars*, on condition of military service. The followers of a *sherogar* cultivated the lands in times of peace and took to arms in times of conflict. This arrangement enabled the poligar to assemble a considerable number of troops at a short notice. For instance the Setupati of Ramanathapuram found it no difficult a task to collect 30,000 to 40,000 armed men in less than eight days.[3]

As a usual practice, the actual cultivation of land was entrusted with a caste of workers, the Pullers, the counter-

1. Nawab Umdut ul Umara, 20 March 1795. Letter to Madras Council, Military Country Correspondence, Vol. 46, p. 32.
2. Fifth Report, Vol. 2, Madras, 1883, pp. 89-90 and B. S. Ward, *Geographical and Statistical Memoir of Madura and Dindigul*, Madras, Vol. 3, pp. 68-72.
3. John Bertrand, La Mission du Madure, Vol. 4, Trans. Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, pp. 194-195.

parts of serfs in a baronial estate. The Pullers who tilled the fields of the poligar received a little dry grain for their subsistence, but no fixed share of the crops. On the other hand, those who worked in the fields of the *sherogars* received a fixed share of the harvest. The field workers were not tied to the estate, but their poverty forced them to sell their services for long periods. In that case the custom of the land gave their master the right to exact every kind of service from them, to mortgage them to another master for the money borrowed, to hire them out to others for daily labour and even to sell the servants to another person by whom they were held in the same bondage. Still, the status of the Pullers who sold their services, appeared better than that of slaves: for they were not subjected to it forcibly and were permitted to purchase their freedom. Despite their scanty means of subsistence, the Pullers, prompted by an ambition to obtain relief from affliction, contracted their wants to the mere preservation of their lives so that their savings might at some distant period enable them to purchase their freedom. This would usually happen when their master consented to release them on receipt of an amount or when he was involved in some distress. After obtaining freedom from bondage these workers cultivated the fields with animation which could be expected from their altered status.

The cultivated lands in the poligar country were usually classified into four categories based upon productivity. They were *kirsul* or black cotton ground, free from stones and sand; the *shevul* or land with mixture of red soil, stones and sand; *pottul* or ground with a mixture of black and white earth, with stones and *veppul* or land with a mixture of brown earth, clay and sand. Productivity was decided on the basis of soil conditions, but this was applied only to the wet lands.

The poligar's share of the produce was known as *potuchilavu* which literally meant public expense. It was estimated at 50% of the yield; the assessment being made on the basis of soil conditions. The share of the poligar was regulated

by *mamool* or custom, but it being an undefined term was used in reality as a plea for committing every kind of abuse. The fluctuation of taxes, the want of an established standard in the assessment of dry-grain fields and the intricate details of ready money collections were real evils in the revenue administration of poligar territories. The peasants on their part relied upon evasive tactics against the encroaching evils. It was a common practice that a ryot managed to possess greater extent of land than what was found on the records either by keeping the actual extent unnoticed by the officials or by bribing the surveyors. The additional area for which the peasant paid no tax varied from 50 to 100 per cent of the extent of the land for which he actually paid.[4] In fact there followed a struggle between oppressive exactions and fraudulent evasions.

However, during the post-Nayak period the exactions in a poligar territory did not appear as oppressive as they were in the circar territory. At times the oppressed ryots fled from the circar country to the palayams in order to escape from exactions. At a later period when Nawab Mohammad Ali of Arcot annexed Ariyalur and Wodayarpalayam, he found the taxes so small that he levied four times of what the poligars collected.[5] The economy of Ramanathapuram appeared prosperous before the annexation of that territory by the Nawab, but it broke down in the subsequent years.[6] These facts establish that the peasants of the poligar country were economically better placed than those in the circar country.

The Kaval System

In addition to the military establishment of the poligars, there existed a police set up called the *kaval*. The word *kaval* means 'watch' and a person who performed the duty was called *kavalkara* or *talayari*. The *kaval* system was essentially

4. S. R. Lushington 29 December 1800, Report to the Board of Revenue, Madras, pp. 9-14.
5. Military Sundry Book, Madras, Vol. 40, p. 93.
6. Madras Council, 15 June 1772, Madras, Military Consultations, Vol. 168, p. 488.

the South Indian counterpart of the 'hue and cry' in Anglo-Saxon England. Until the Moghul invasions, the poligar and the kaval systems existed as two parallel organisations. The poligars of the Vijayanagar period had nothing to do with the *kavalkars* of the traditional Tamil Nadu.

From times immemorial every village had its *kavalkars*, who were posted either by village communities or by rulers for guarding the villages. The services of the *kavalkars* were rewarded by a fee called *stalam kaval*, which consisted of a portion of the crop which they protected or a monetary payment in lieu thereof. The kaval system was in substance based upon the principle, 'set a thief to catch a thief'. Accordingly, the responsibility of apprehending a thief was entrusted with groups of inhabitants like the Kallans and the Maravas, who during this period considered robbery as their profession. This conferred upon a habitual thief a sense of responsibility. Thus it sought to rectify a social evil by the application of a self corrective remedy.

The two systems, poligar and kaval, complemented each other. The poligars rendered military service to the king and gave security to the country against external invasions. The *Kavalkars* on the otherhand discharged police duties and preserved internal order. The poligars were for the poligar territories, while the *Kavalkars* were for the circar lands doing complementary duties. Both the establishments were solely supported by the inhabitants. It was the duty of the sovereign to see them functioning efficiently and separately of each other. The distinct existence of the two establishments appeared essential not only for preventing the overgrowth of their influence but for safeguarding the interests of the sovereign as well as of the subjects.

However, the turmoil which attended the Moghul invasions and the subsequent rebellions created circumstances favourable for the integration of the two systems. The collapse of the established order exposed the inhabitants to the evil of

universal conflagration. The central government distracted by its own problems found it impossible to give protection ro the *kavalkars* in order to enable them to execute their duties. The inhabitants of several villages in consequence appealed to the powerful poligars for protection. The chiefs on their part readily undertook the new responsibility. They re-appointed the former *kavalkars* or superseded them by their own servants. In return for their service, they received from the inhabitants a voluntary contribution called the *deshakaval*. The assumption of a new responsibility greatly contributed to the growth of their influence, for they obtained more rights and a new source of revenue. This in turn called for and enabled the poligars to increase their military establishments. In short the poligars grew in strength in their service to the circar villages.

Armed Establishments

The obligations to the sovereign, their habitual mode of life, ideas of comparative superiority and indulgence to vanity made them maintain their own armed establishments. They considered the attendance of a large body of armed men indispensable for the assertion of their rights and to their appearance in public. The armed establishments naturally consumed a large part of their resources.

Their military dependents consisted of three descriptions: the *amarum peons, cuttubudy peons* and the *mercenary peons*. The first two groups were paid chiefly in land and the third entirely in money and grain. The *amarum peons* were granted lands on hereditary basis. Assessed at a very favourable rate, paying only a quit rent, they were jointly bound to pay the rent of their villages. These peons, placed under the command of a sardar or officer in bodies of twenty or thirty men, were required to take a pledge to yield their services to their masters. Their obligations were not only to attend to the summons of the poligars, but also to prevent theft within their villages. They forfeited their services and lands if they were found disqualified for the discharge of their duties. The *cuttubudy peons* were also given lands. Their tenure was hereditary, but it was less

by right than by sufferance. In fact they were ryots, rendering military service and were paid by assignments of waste lands in lieu of pecuniary wages. They served the poligars with pikes and match-locks at their own expense and made restitution of any property, plundered within the village entrusted to their care. The mercenary peons were recruited only in times of emergency. During active service all these armed men received subsistence in money and grain, exclusviely of the other privileges granted to them. The poligar trained a considerable body of men in the profession of arms. The interests of the peons were identified with the preservation of the authority of their master. The peons regarded the rights of their chief as paramount and his orders as their only law. When the poligar commanded them, they executed his orders implicity. On such occasions, they considered murder and robbery as mere matters of duty, for which their chief alone was responsible.[7]

Poligar Warfare

The poligars in common cherished a spirit of independence and turbulence. The absence of any definition of their privileges, their assumed power and the state set up by them, led them into upholding themselves against the rulers frequently. With forts, a few old guns and a little equipment of stores, they overawed their neighbours. Those who could not manage their own affairs, usually put themselves under the influence of adventurers, whose interest was to enrich themselves. The jargon of these self-seekers inflated the martial spirit of their masters.

The poligars constructed forts with mud and stone either on deep cotton-plains or on the hills for the convenience of defence. They enclosed the forts with barriers and woods; but appeared vulnerable to heavy cannonade. Their forces consisted of two major divisions - the matchlock men and the pike men. The weapons in common use included the cannon,

7. Madras Council, 13 August 1802, Revenue Consultations, Vol. 118, pp. 1688-1694.

muskets, wall pieces, shields, swords, pikes and match-locks.[8] The pike was nothing but the bamboo spear, eighteen to twenty feet long. They also used target, spear, dagger, sling, bow and arrow. Clay-pellets, prepared by mixing the white of the egg with clay, served the purpose of bullets. Rockets, usually fired into the camps of the enemies, were also in use. A peculiar weapon used by the poligars especially of Kallarnadu was the *valaithadi* or boomerang. It was a crescent shaped weapon, one end left heavy while the other edge sharp. Made of some hard grained wood or iron, the *valaithadi* measured about twenty four inches along the outer-curve and eighteen along the chord arc. A soldier held it by the lighter end and hurled it with tremendous force against the enemy. A whirling motion imparted to the weapon brought it back to the spot from where it was thrown, unless it got struck on its victim.[9] Nevertheless, these arms were of short range.

In times of conflict the opposing parties, as a rule, called upon their magicians to exercise all the resources of black art for ensuring victory. The competing sorcerers sought to excell each other by issuing one charm or a counter-charm. The process ultimately ended in restoring the status-quo-ante, for the opposing charms nullified each other. Ultimately the military superiority and strategy decided the issue on the field. Still the magicians of the victorious party shared a large part of the glory. This practice was not confined to poligar warfare but extended to major wars too.[10]

The poligars never risked a pitched battle. When a superior force threatened them, they assumed defensive position in their thick jungles. Lying in ambush, they boldly

8. Nawab Mohammad Ali, 11 June 1767, Letter to Colonel Campbell Military Country Correspondence, Madras, Vol. 15, p. 139.
9. E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, Madras, 1907, pp. 556-557.
10. Abbe J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, (Trans.) K. Beauchamp, Oxford, 1897, Part 3, p. 688.

attacked the invading army and wrought havoc. If the cavalry of the enemy launched a surprise attack, the pike-men of the poligars formed themselves into a close ring encircling the matchlock men, pointing the pikes against the attacking horse. They set down in the same order and fixed the nether end of the pike into a hole on the ground betwixt their legs, while the matchlock men kept up an irregular fire above their heads against the pressing enemy. In this manner they resisted even the violent charges of the cavalry and sometimes even of the infantry, though they appeared helpless before artillery fire. The chiefs constructed the forts in such a way as to guarantee its easy defence. When the enemy besieged their stronghold, their troops threw themselves behind the barriers for convenience of counter attack. The match-lock men taking their position on the elevated spots of the fort, fired at the approaching enemy, while the troops stationed at the bastions sallied out gallantly. The pike men meanwhile wielded the sharp pikes from their wonderfully sheltered enclaves in the walls. The assailants advancing towards a breach on the wall could never reach the pike men and could seldom tell from whence the blow was struck.[11] Despite the limited resources at their command, the poligars put up formidable resistance even against major campaigns.

Extension of Influence

The period between 1650 and 1760 saw unprecedented growth of the influence of the poligars. The chieftains made vast additions to their privileges through three methods—by force, by the consent of the villages and by the approval of the rulers.

The situation of the circar and poligar villages, mixed together indiscriminately and the holding of farms at favourable rent in the circar country by the poligars favoured their systematic interference in the villages. The chieftains employed different devices for encroaching upon the circar lands. One

11. J. Welsh, *Military Reminiscences*, London 1830, Vol. 1, pp. 67-78.

method was to supersede the local authority; in this case, they subjected, instead of removing the usual *kavalkars*, into a complete submission to him and levied an annual contribution from the *kavalkars* as a badge of their dependence upon them. A second method was to induce the inhabitants of the circar villages to flee to the *palayams.* This practice which appeared to be with the approbation of the inhabitants was generally encouraged by the poligars and usually brought about by their own intrigues. When the circar servants asked for the return of inhabitants, the poligars on their part demanded, as a condition the recognition of their right to protect the village against exactions. Threatened with the loss of revenue, the circar servants had no alternative but to recognize the chief as the protector of the village.[12] This gave him an excuse to interfere in the internal affairs of the circar country at random. A third practice was to plough on the *kaval* lands and thereby to encroach from one point to another. Whenever this was done, the poligars could not conceal their real intention, for at that time they would have had abundant uncultivated lands in their own districts. Nevertheless this undermined the circar authority and deprived the inhabitants of the right of cultivating the fields so as to facilitate the extension of their jurisdiction. Lastly, the poligars diverted the trade from the circar country to their *palayams* for obtaining its benefit. The first three of these methods were solely directed against the ruler's interests and the last one against the ruler's as well as the inhabitants' in the circar country. In fact the weakness of the central government enabled the poligars to usurp the rights of their sovereign.[13]

The stormy political situation also contributed to the growth of poligars' influence. In an attempt to escape from the terrors wrought by interminable conflicts, more villages

12. Madras Council, 28 November 1800, Revenue Consultations, Vol. 106, pp. 3191-3201.
13. S. R. Lushington 29 December 1800, Report to the Board of Revenue Madras. pp. 2-4.

sought the protection of chieftains. Meanwhile, the villages, which had already accepted their protection paid enhanced rates in proportion to the increased responsibility undertaken by the poligars for holding the disorders at bay. Thus a two fold process of more villages seeking their protection and the *kaval* villages paying increased rates enabled the poligars to extend their jurisdiction.

The rewards made by the ruler or his governors in return for the poligars' services also swelled their resources. They sought the military aid of these chiefs in order to defend their authority against the rebellious subjects. The chieftains accordingly assisted a ruler not as part of their duty to their overlord but in consideration of obtaining rewards.[14] The administrators too entered into intrigues with the poligars and connived at their increasing the *palayams* and interfering with the collection of revenue. In consequence the poligars allowed the circar only such proportion of the revenue as they pleased. In order to warrant these enormities they would spare a part of the spoil to the public servants. This practice was nothing but a division of the public revenue. Rapine and violence were not merely connived at but openly assisted and most of the usurpations committed by the poligars received either public sanction or secret encouragement of authority.[15] By these means some fair, while others unfair, the poligars greatly enhanced their resources and extended the limits of their *palayams*.

All these had profound influence upon the character of the poligars. The chiefs transformed themselves from a class of public servants into a domestic militia, paid by the inhabitants and compensated for their services by their overlord. Strengthening their military establishments and converting their detached villages into military posts, they gradually rendered themselves

14. Madras Council, 28 November 1800, Revenue Consultations, Vol. 106, p. 3198.
15. Madras Council, 30 October 1791, Military Consultations, Vol. 168, p. 5463.

independent. Subsequently, they made continued encroachments not only upon the territories of the ruler whom they were expected to serve but also upon the rights of the inhabitants whom they agreed to protect.[16]

Under the changed condition the tax burden of the villagers increased enormously. The poligars now levied three different taxes under the name *deshakaval*. The first was the usual demand consisting of a certain fixed annual payment. The inhabitants suffered a lot if their village declined in its tillage or in the size of its population, as the tax was not liable to proportionate reduction. The second levy consisted of fees on the ploughs, a small share of paddy from the fields and taxes on looms, bazaars and the like. The third was a certain allotment from the standing crops carried over to the circar's share of the revenue. As this was an absolute robbery of the circar revenue, it did not fall on the inhabitants like the first two taxes In consequence of the multiplication of the taxes, the *deshakaval* of the early times which was so insignificant as could be levied by the favour of the prince and much more frequently by the liberality of the villagers had become burdensome exactions. In addition to the *deshakaval* the chiefs levied fees under various pretences such as hunting batta, marriage expenses and presents. When the collection of these taxes was not quietly submitted to, torture and whip were applied, the whole village was put into confinement, every occupation was interdicted, the cattle driven off and the inhabitants taken captives.[17] The system thus degenerated, the principle of force superseded that of service.

16. Benjamin Torin, 15 October 1791, Letter to Madras Council, Military Consultations, Vol. 168, pp. 5465-5466.

17. Rev. T. B. Pandyan, *The Ancient Heroes of South Indian Peninsula*, Madras, p. 19.

Chapter V

THE NAYAKS AND THE PEOPLE

For over four centuries the Telugu powers-the nayaks and the poligars - mostly of Naidu and Reddi communities-dominated the political scene of Tamil Nadu. To begin with they moved into the Land of the Tamils as refugees, escaping fire and sword, carried by the Muslims. Referred to as *Vadugas* or northeners in inscriptions and literature, they included Kannadians too. Their influx increased since they emerged into a political power with the expansion of Vijayanagar. As nayaks and poligars, they wrested political authority and reduced the Tamils to a subordinate status. When the Bijapur-Golkonda thrust southward spread death and destruction, more of Telugus poured into Tamil Nadu. Greatly strengthened by the new arrivals and taking advantage of the eclipse of imperial authority, the Telugu powers of the Tamil Country asserted their independence.

The administration of these powers centred on a princely order, which consisted of the nayaks and the poligars. The governors of the political divisions and generals of their armed establishments were either members of the royal family or influential nobles-all belonging to the Telugu fold.

Administration

The nayak was the head of the administration. An autocrat, he lived in pomp, travelled in splendour, maintained a large harem and gave charity to the Brahmins at the expense of Tamil peasants. A Muslim traveller in 1628 refers that the Nayak of Madurai had 700 wives, all followed him upon his death to his funeral pyre. Perhaps this ruler was Muthu Virappa Nayaka. The Jesuit letters make it clear that Tirumala Nayaka kept 200 women and Kilavan Setupati 47 women-all of these victims committed sati on the death of these rulers.[1] The

1 R. Sathyanatha Iyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, pp. 154-157.

welfare of the people depended upon what the rulers did but these pleasure seekers found little time to devote. Nevertheless the king was assisted by ministers and nobles, who too imitated their masters in all their evil habits. The principal minister was called *dalevoy*, who combined in himself both civil and military powers. Govinda Dikshita of Thanjavur and Ramappayyan of Madurai were among the well known *dalavays* of the period. The revenue minister was called as *pradhan*, the royal secretary as *rayasam*, accountant as *kanakkan* and foreign secretary as *sthanapathi*.[2]

The kingdom was divided into *nadus*, *nadu* into *seemais* or *mahanas* and *seemai* into *gramas*. In the Madura Country there were three large provinces - Tirunelveli, Tiruchirapalli and Satyamangalam, each placed under a governor. While officials of different gradations were entrusted with the administration of *nadus* and *mahanas*, the *gramas* were placed under the administration of village officials. The Telugus received preference for employment in temple, administration and army. This contributed to the introduction of a large Telugu population in Tamil Nadu.

The ruler derived his income from the collection of taxes and exaction of contributions and spent the money as he liked. The sources of income included taxes from crown lands, tribute paid by the poligars, export and import duties and pearl and chank fisheries. There were numerous poligars in Madurai Country, while not so in Thanjavur. Though one fourth of the produce of the land was the traditional share of the state, the circar collected more than one half of it, at times up to nine-tenths, depending upon exigencies. A.J. Stuart asserts that the land tax was higher in Senji than in Madurai. In addition to the usual taxes, which were paid either in money or in kind, the people were required to surrender to oppressive exactions. As the Jesuits have rightly pointed out

2. V. Vriddhagirisan, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, pp. 174-175.
3. R. Sathyanatha Iyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, p. 140.

the Nayak rule was marked by the worst form of tyranny.[4] Whip, thumb screw and other instruments of torture were applied for the enforcement of exactions. In case of default even milk hedge was poured into the eyes for blinding the victims.

Though the taxes were collected with the utmost rigour, public funds were squandered away with callous indifference. It was wasted on harems and agraharams. The Nayaks paid tribute to the Vijayanagar Empire but they withheld it and saved that expense in consequence of the assertion of their independence. Further they incurred expenditure on charities to Brahmins, donations to temples and maintenance of military establishments. Erection of forts, construction of pagodas and patronage of learning too engaged their attention.[5] Improvement of water courses, formation of roads, encouragement of education and succour to the poor were neglected, and if they were undertaken, they were not for the benefit of common people.

The military and spy systems remained as the principal sources of strength of the nayak administration. The army consisted of infantry, cavalry, elephants and camels. The troops carried with them different weapons of war, tents and medicinal herbs. The weapons of war included bows, arrows, long spears and broad swords. The nayaks purchased elephants from the Portuguese and horses from the Arabs. While the Portuguese imported elephants from Ceylon, the Arabs imported horses from Arabia.[6] The poligars, who maintained their own armed forces, extended their aid to the ruler on requisition. The Poligar of Kannivadi and the Setupati of Ramanathapuram went to the defence of Madurai against the Bijapuris and the Kannadians. Though the army appeared formidable it proved inefficient on the field of battle. The nayaks

4. Ibid., pp. 144-145.
5. T. V. Mahalingam, *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar*, p. 334.
6. V. Vriddhagirisan, *The Nayaks of Tanjore* pp 174-175.

particularly of Thanjavur took interest in the developments in Ceylon, yet the control of the sea engaged no serious attention. However, they gave due importance to the spy system. Numerous spies roamed about the country in disguise, collected intelligence about the enemies and the people and reported the developments to the rulers.[7]

Judicial administration received no due importance. In the villages it was left to the village chieftains and local bodies. The *petel* settled the disputes, attended to police duty and collected taxes. He was guided by customs and traditions. The *panchayat* assisted him in taking decisions. In the coastal region the Portuguese or the Dutch exercised this authority. Yet the nayaks maintained some irregular courts, called *dharma-salas* in their capitals and the *pradhanis* served as the judges. Most of the cases were settled through arbitration. In serious cases fines were levied and imprisonment was awarded.[8] It does not appear that the nayaks had any prison establishment, for the captives were kept in private buildings or old choultries and kept tied on the fields under hot sun.

Life of the People

The society was divided into the traditional castes. The people spoke Tamil or Telugu and followed Hinduism or Islam mostly. The Telugus - mostly Naidus, Reddis and Rajus - who formed the ruling class-lived in luxury and comfort. But the vast majority of the population led a miserable life. John Nieuhoff described the inhabitants of the coastal area as deceitful and cunning[9] and Peter Martin characterised them as rude and ignorant.[10] As a result the people observed the law of retaliation very strictly. If there happened to be a quarrel and one of the parties committed suicide, the

7. K. Rajayyan, *Administration and Society in the Carnatic*, p. 19.
8. Selection from Judicial Records, Madras, Vol. II, p. 106.
9. John Nieuhoff, *Voyages and Travels into Brasil and East Indies*, Vol. II, p. 194.
10. Lockman, *Travels of the Jesuits*, Vol. I, p. 367.

rival party was required to do the same. Man made little account of his wife, yet generally kept two or three harlots, by whom he had sometimes sixteen to eighteen children.[11] This was how the European travellers saw the working of the society under the nayaks.

The average man wore nothing but a single piece of calico, wrapt about his middle and another piece about his head. The ordinary woman commonly wore a painted calico. The fashionable ladies adorned themselves with gold rings and bracelets, when they were on travel but the Jesuit missionarise saw them as very nasty at home. The women tied their hair up in a truss behind. The rich people in the villages lived upon rice and meat but usually drank nothing but water. Sati and *parda* rendered the lot of women miserable.[12] The vast majority of the people lived in thatched huts in their isolated villages. However the rich people, invariably revenue servants and village chiefains, lived in square houses with court yards inside.

The inhabitants depended upon the monsoons for beginning the agricultural operations. In October and November the western winds blew with such violence that they carried the sand from the hills to the shore and the people found it difficult even to open their eyes. During hot seasons the winds blew as if it came out of a fiery furnace. Much rain fell near Kanyakumari but not in other areas. Therefore the peasants depended upon rivers, tanks and wells for irrigtion. Employing bulls and pagota, the peasants spent day and night for keeping their fields wet. The other occupations included cattle rearing, weaving, dyeing and pearl fishing.[13]

The Jesuits saw many areas as barren, for there grew neither grass nor plants except thorny shrubs. Yet the towns

11. *Ibid*, pp. 410-413.
12. John Nieuhoff, *Voyages and Travels into Brasil and East Indies*, Vol. II, p. 294.
13. V. Vriddhagirisan, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, pp. 175-177.

like Madurai, Kottar and Senji were well provided. The sea-shore abounded in hares and patridges. The mice of some varieties appeared as big as cats, which fought each other like dogs. The serpants, bears, tigers and wolves roamed about the country.[14]

As Father Martin had observed in 1699, the people lived in such an utmost sobriety and frugality that they adjusted their needs to what the country produced.[15] As a result trade did not grow. The little trade that existed was both inland and foreign. The Indian merchants particularly the Chettis, described as very cunning by foreigners, controlled internal trade but encountered difficulties because of insecurity of of travel and extortion of levies. Normally they travelled in convoys, with their packed animals, which were employed to carry goods. The way side choultries that were constructed by the ancient Pandyas and the Cholas in aid of the weary travellers continued to exist, but were neglected. The Portuguese and the Dutch controlled the foreign trade. The European merchants sold spices brought from Moluccas and leather from Japan. They purchased rice from Thanjavur and painted cloth and linen from Madurai. The Coromandel cloth was excellent in colours, yet was cheap. The English reached the coast of Thanjavur expecting a large trade in pepper but they found the stock meagre and the nayak "very coveteous expecting very great presents yearly." Therefore they abandoned the region and concentrated upon Malabar Coast for the purchase of pepper.

The nayaks were Vaishnavites and extended their patronage to their religion. They tolerated Jainism and Saivism but generally persecuted the Christians. The Jesuits of the Madurai Mission in their venture to identify with the masses ate neither meat nor fish nor eggs and never drank any strong liquor. As the local inhabitants did, they lived in wretched

14. R. Sathyanatha Iyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, pp. 244-246.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

huts, covered with straw, having not so much as a bed, a chair or piece of furniture. Yet they were subjected to persecution. Frequently, their teeth were beaten out and they were thrown into prisons. John de Britto was executed. Yet the Jesuits gained converts and founded numerous churches.[16]

The nayaks promoted the study of Sanskrit, Telugu, science and mathematics. They made grants to the temples, matts and schools for the education of the Brahmins. The people belonging to other communities were denied of any right to receive education. No wonder most of the inhabitants langiushed in ignorance.

Natural calamities and political oppression rendered the life of the inhabitants unbearable. Famine, drought and epidemics repeatedly visited the country and wiped off large portions of the population. The victims received no relief or succour from the administration. The frequent wars added to the intensity of misery. During the civil war in the Vijayanagar Empire, the dead bodies were left on banks of rivers unburied.[17] A letter of the Jesuits in 1665 describes the effects of a Muhammadan invasion. "Our fear of the arrival of the Muhammadans was soon realized; the story of the disorders created and cruelties committed by them, and the desolation which they spread everywhere on their way, struck consternation in every heart..... A large number after slaying their women and children plunged their sword into their bodies and fell on their corpses. Entire populations were seen resorting to this tragic death. In other villages the inhabitants gathered together in several houses to which they set fire and perished in the flames".[18] Another letter dated 1676 refers to a general famine which followed a long series of

16. *Ibid.*, pp 150-157.
17. C. S. Srinivasachari, *A History of Gingee and Its Rulers* p. 337.
18. Proenza, Letter to Paul Oliva, 1665, Lockman, *La Mission du Madure*, Vol. III, pp. 158-159.
19. Andra Freire, Letter to Paul Oliva, 1679 *Ibid.*, p. 179.

wars, for it asserts: "Everywhere only devastation and solitude of death are seen".[19] In fact misery was the order of the day.

The rulers, marauders, robbers and slave dealers combined together in adding to the ordeals of victims of war, famine and epidemic. The rulers being Telugus considered the Tamils as a conquered people.. Through exhorbitant levies they continued their oppressive tyranny. In the wake of Telugu expansion to the Tamil Country there came adventurers and marauders. They destroyed or expelled the Tamils from their villages and occupied their fields. Women were searched for, seized and detained at will. Local traditions in different villages of Dindigul and Tirunelveli indicate that the Telugus massacred the entire male population in the Tamil villages and reduced the women to concubinage. As the result of this ruthless process of annihilation, they entirely occupied the northern region of traditional Tamilaham and settled in strength in other regions too. The present day situation in which the Telugus are found in possession of rich fields while the Tamils mostly barren tracts is attributed to the expulsions and usurpations that were enacted during this age. More ordeals awaited the inhabitants, for gangs of robbers 500 to 600 in number emerged out of the forests every night and committed plunder in the villages A Jesuit letter read: "It was dangerous to go from place to place, for the public roads were so infested with the miscreants that everybody was afraid of losing not only their fortunes but their very lives."[20]

In the mean time the Dutch and the English carried away the people to slavery. The Jesuits have recorded: "Shame eternal shame to the Dutch, who cruelly speculated on the misery of the Indians. They enticed them to the coast by the bait of abundant food, then, when their number became pretty large and their strength a little recouped, they piled them up in their ships and transported them to other countries to be sold as slaves."[21] In fact the Telugu administration represented a dark period in the history of the Tamil Country.

20. *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. V, p. 186.

21. John Bertrand, *La Mission du Madure* Vol. I, pp. 119-130.

Chapter VI

THE MARATHAS AND THE MUGHALS

As the seventeenth century drew to a close the Marathas and the Moghuls entered into a struggle for supremacy in the South. Their expansionist designs led them to aggression on the Tamil Country. Taking advantage of internal conflicts among the local powers, they extended their iufluence to the far South. The Marathas acquired possession of Thanjavur and Senji. The Moghuls conquered Arcot, wrested Senji from the Marathas and by 1736 asserted their authority over Madurai too.

Marathas in Thanjavur

The conflict between Chokkanatha Nayaka of Madurai and his governor Alagiri Nayaka in Thanjavur invited Maratha intervention. Before the fall of Thanjavur to the Madurai army the queen of Vijayaraghava, the last ruler, sent her young son Chengamaladas to safety to the Dutch settlement at Nagapatnam. Finding an opportunity in the rebellion of Alagiri Nayaka against Chokkanatha Nayaka, the followers of the fallen nayaks appealed to Sultan Adil Shah of Bijapur for intervention in favour of Chengamaladas. Venkanna Iyer, who betrayed his master Alagiri Nayaka and joined Chengamaladas played a key role in bringing about foreign intervention. Eager to exploit the situation to his advantage, Adil Shah sent his general Ekoji on an expedition to Thanjavur, Otherwise called Venkoji, Ekoji was the son of Shaji Bhonsle by his wife Tukka Bai, while Sivaji was another son of the same father, but by a different wife, Jija Bai. Threatened with the Bijapur expedition, Alagiri Nayaka sought the aid of Madurai but Chokkanatha Nayaka turned a deaf year. In a battle at Ayyampet Ekoji defeated Alagiri Nayaka, occupied Thanjavur and crowned Chengamaladas as the ruler of the kingdom. In return for this service he received rich presents and jagirs in Thanjavur. Because of the machinations of Venkanna Iyer, the Nayaks found it impossible to stabilise their return

to power. On the death of Adil Shah in 1676 Ekoji usurped the throne for himself and founded the Maratha rule in Thanjavur.[1]

Robert Orme has given the following version about this development. "In the year 1680, the king of Tanjore attacked and well nigh overpowered by the king of Trichinopoly, called the Morattoes to his assistance. The famous Seevaji who at that time reigned over all the Morattoe nations, sent his brother with a strong army, . . . they took possession of the government and shortly after, the brother of Seevaji declared himself king of Tanjore."[2] But this observation does not appear correct, for the *Thanjavuri Andhra Rajula Charitam* makes it clear that Ekoji led the army at the orders of Sultan Idal Khan of Bijapur in aid of Chengamaladas about 1674 A.D. and the usurpation was a later development.[3] The records of the English East India Company too indicate that Ekoji gained possession of the kingdom by 1676, while Sivaji led his army to the Carnatic in 1676-77.

Ekoji consolidated his rule over the newly acquired territory that consisted of the present day district of Thanjavur and parts of the districts of Tiruchirapalli and South Arcot. Bangalore, which he held as a jagir, formed part of his possessions. However, he found his position precarious because of the hostile attitude of the neighbouring powers. The Nayaks of Madurai and the Muslim powers of the North made repeated irruptions. Therefore he decided to part with far off territories and concentrate upon the defences of the delta. By a settlement with Chikkadeva Raya of Mysore, he sold his jagir of Bangalore for three lakhs of rupees in 1687.[5] With a view to strengthening

1. William Hickey, *The Tanjore Mahratta Principality in Southern India*, St. Thome, 1874, pp. 81-83.
2. Robert Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Moghul Empire*, p. 119.
3. C. K. Srinivasan, *Maratha Rule in the Carnatic*, p. 134.
4. English Records on Shivaji, Vol. II, p. 88.
5. C. A. Natesan (prjnters), *Tanjore Maratha History*, p 3.

his position, he reorganised his administration by inducting the Marathas and Brahmins from the Maratha Country. The new masters took away the fertile lands from the Tamil peasants and transferred them to the Marathas and the Brahmins. As a result the Tamil pesants, mostly of Kallar community, were reduced to the status of tenants. Ekoji, as Father Britto asserts, took three fourths of the produce as tax, collected cash payments, raised prices arbitrarily for raising the taxes and appropriated for himself the treasures from the temples.[6] Jadunath Sarkar, based upon his study of distorted accounts, has arrived at a wrong conclusion when he tells of his rule as a splendid administration.[7] But Father Andre Freire was right when he describes Ekoji: "he is a pagan who has no other God than his cupidity."[8]

Sivaji's Conquest of Senji

This was a period when the Marathas were emerging as a formidable military power in South India. After establishing themselves as a leading power at Satara and Kolhapur, they sought political gains in the East Coast. By the end of the year 1676 Sivaji collected a large army consisting of 30,000 horses and 40,000 foot and embarked upon his expedition to the Tamil Country. He won financial and military support from the Sultan of Golkonda by promising to cede, it is believed, half of his conquests. On his way he levied contributions from the Nawabs of Kurnool and Cuddapah. After reaching Tirupati, he sent an advance party of 5,000 horse to Kanchipuram. He won over Rauf Khan and Nasir Muhammad, the commanders of the Bijapuri garrison, and occupied Senji without much effort. The conflict between the Afghan and Deccani Muslims in Bijapur greatly helped Sivaji in his task. The Sultan of Golkonda expected the cession of Senji in accordance with the agreement but Sivaji retained possession of his conquests and organised his own system of military administration. From Senji he sent an expedition to Vellore

6. C. K. Srinivasan, *Maratha Rule in Carnatic*, p. 174.
7. J. Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 314.
8. Bertrand, *La Mission du Madure*, Vol. III, p. 306.

which was strongly defended by the Bijapuri commander Abdulla Khan, and himself advanced towards Thanjavur. In a battle at Tiruvadi on the river Kollidam he defeated Sher Khan, the Bijapuri governor of Waligandapuram. After this victory, he held an interview with his half brother Ekoji, the ruler of Thanjavur. The two brothers discussed the issue of the partition of their father's jagirs, but there came differences. In retaliation Sivaji occupied Ekoji's territory on the Kollidam. The siege of Vellore continued in the mean time and the fort surrendered to the Marathas in 1678. Sivaji made this fort one of his strongholds. After spending ten months in Tamil Nadu he returned to his home country, entrusting the administration of his conquests with his younger brother, Santaji.[9]

Ekoji waited for an opportunity to regain possession of his lost territory on the Kollidam. On the departure of Sivaji from the East Coast, he attacked and defeated the forces of Santaji. However, a settlement was made by which Ekoji was to retain possession of Thanjavur and Santaji Senji. In 1680 Sivaji in return for his alliance with the Sultan of Bijapur obtained from the latter the right to take possession of the territories that he conquered in the East Coast including Thanjavur. This so much disheartened Ekoji that he neglected the affairs of state and thought of going as an ascetic. But Sivaji sent a letter of consolation to his brother and requested him to take care of his kingdom. In 1680 Sivaji passed away. This left Ekoji as the independent ruler of his state. The two Telugu kingdoms of Senji and Thanjavur became Maratha territories. As a result the Marathas eclipsed the Telugus in the Tamil Country.

Moghul Conquest of Senji

On the death of Sivaji in 1680 his son Sambhaji crowned himself as the king of the Marathas. The new ruler appointed his brother-in-law Harji Raja as the governor of Senji in 1681.

9. C. K. Srinivasan, *Maratha Rule in the Carnatic* p. 54.

However, the situation appeared critical, for the Moghuls occupied Bijapur and Golkonda between the years 1685 and 1688, seized Sambhaji in 1689 and threatened the existence of the Maratha State.

In 1688 the advance forces of the Moghuls penetrated to the Tamil Country. They occupied Poonamalle and Vandavasi and drove the Marathas southward. The frequent conflicts and incessant raids ruined the country and caused the outbreak of famine. Determined to resist the Moghul aggression Harji Raja strengthened the fort of Senji and assembled his forces, but he passed away in 1689. Thereupon his widow Ambika Bai assumed the governorship. By this time Aurangzeb executed Sambhaji and threatened the capital of the Marathas at Raigad. As the situation appeared desperate, Rajaram, who succeeded his brother Sambhaji to power, decided to evacuate the capital. Travelling in disguise through the hilly tracts, Rajaram and his party reached Senji in 1689. Taking over the administration from Ambika Bai, he made Senji the capital of the Marathas, formed a government of his own and organised a guerilla warfare in his bid to check the Moghul advance to the far South.[10]

In June 1690 the Moghul army under the command of Zulfikar Khan took the field against the Marathas in the Tamil Country. After gaining a series of victories over the Maratha forces, it threatened Senji. For fear of seizure, Raja Ram escaped to Thanjavur and took shelter with Shahji, the ruler of the Kingdom. Yet, the Moghuls could gain no easy victory, for the fort of Senji appeared so impregnable that they hesitated to launch an immediate assault. Internal conflicts and financial difficulties added to their troubles. Raja Ram now received reinforcements from Thanjavur and Maharashtra and returned in strength to his capital at Senji. Hard pressed for want of provisions and heavy guns, Zulfikar Khan appealed to Emperor Aurangzeb for reinforcements and sup-

10. Ibid. pp. 190-198.

plies. In response the Emperor in 1691 A.D. sent Asad Khan the Grand Wazir and father of Zulfikar Khan and Prince Kam Baksh to Senji with forces and provisions.[11]

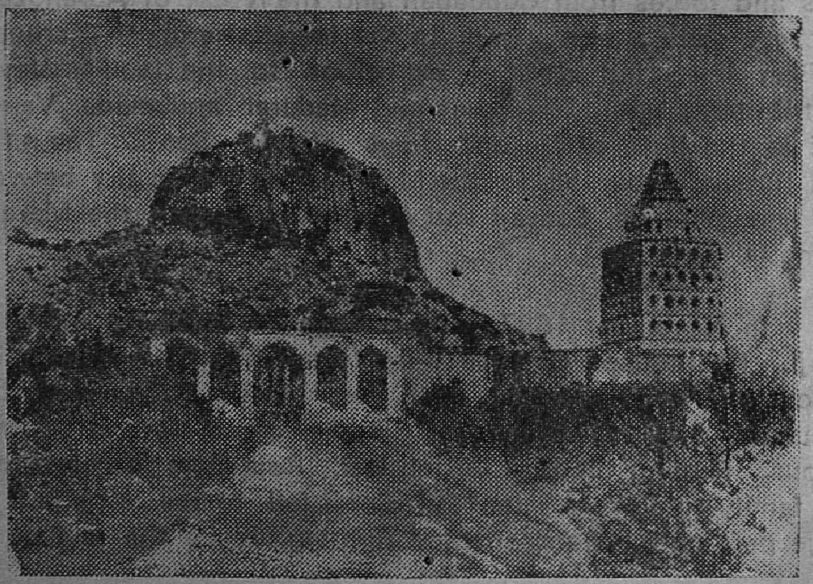
Zulfikar Khan in the mean time marched to the south against Thanjavur and Madurai. Under threat of invasion, he exacted large contributions from Shahji, the ruler of Thanjavur and Mangammal, the queen of Madurai.[12] After his return he concerted the strategy for the capture of the fort. The Moghuls blockaded Senji, but the fortifications were so extensive that their attempt proved ineffective. The Maratha sallies and heavy rains prolonged the operations. The forces of Raja Ram regained control of the nearby hills, took several of the Moghuls as prisoners and intercepted supplies. Differences between Asad Khan and Kam Baksh, wild rumours about the death of Aurangzeb and scarcity of grain drove the Moghul forces to consternation. However the timely arrival of supplies and forces from Cuddapah and the report of Aurangzeb's recovery gave a new vigour to the imperial army. Thereupon Zulfikar Khan led another expedition to the south, levied contributions upon Thanjavur and Madurai and made Vandavasi as the base of his operations against Senji. The situation turned favourable for the Moghuls, as the rivalry between the two generals, Santaji and Dhanaji weakened the Maratha camp.[13]

In November 1697 Zulfikar Khan resumed the attack on Senji. He reduced Chakkili Durg to submission and launched a powerful assault on the main fort. Daud Khan, second in command, led the scaling party and pursued the attack with vigour. Finding his position critical, Raja Ram escaped with his family to Vellore. In 1698 Senji fell to the Moghuls. A large part of the garrison died fighting, while the rest of the

11. C. S. Srinivasachari, *A History of Gingee and its Rulers*, pp. 293-294.
12. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 6 May 1771, Vol. 39, pp. 332-383.
13. *Ibid* pp. 382-383.

Maratha force retreating through Chengam, Tiruppattur and Kolar, reached Poona. The loss of Senji administered a serious blow to the Marathas and contributed to the consolidation of Moghul sway over the Tamil Country.[14]

Appointed Nawab of the Carnatic by 1698, Zulfikar Khan consolidated his authority over Senji. He renamed the town as Nasrat Godah or City of Victory and reorganised the administration of the country with Daud Khan as the Foujdar of Senji. He sent expeditions to the far South and established his influence over the Kingdoms of Thanjavur, Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga. Early in November 1701 Zulfikar Khan returned to Delhi. Daud Khan who succeeded him as Nawab of the Carnatic was a noble of great energy and enterprize. He formed out streets in the town of Senji



A view of the Fort and Mahal at Senji

14. *Ibid.* pp. 385-390.

and renovated the fortress. However, as the place appeared unhealthy, he shifted his capital to Arcot on the bank of the Palar. He occupied Vellore from the Marathas in 1704 and reduced Thanjavur and Madurai into regular tributaries. On his return to Delhi, Emperor Aurangzeb appointed Sadat-ul-lah Khan as the next Nawab. The new ruler took advantage of the disintegration of the Moghul Empire to establish his own dynasty of the Nevayets.

Rebellion of Rajah Desing

Though the Moghuls occupied Senji, they encountered a serious opposition presented before long by a rebel chief, Rajah Desing (Jai Singh). After the fall of the fort, the Emperor appointed killedars in charge of the administration. One of them was Raja Swarup Singh, appointed in 1700. Of Rajput descent, Swarup Singh was perhaps related to one of the princesses in the Moghul harem. He emerged prominent in the service with the imperial army and gained control of Senji. In the English records he is referred to as a powerful ruler. Taking advantage of the disorders in the Moghul Empire, he withheld payment of tribute. Upon his death in 1714 Rajah Desing assumed the governorship of Senji. The *Desinga Rajan Kathai*, a ballad in Tamil, refers to one Terani Singh as the father of this prince, but the English records refer to Swarup Singh. Perhaps Terani Singh was another name of Swarup Singh.

Emperor Farruksiyar directed Nawab Sadat-ul-lah-Khan to collect the arrears of rent, estimated at seventy lakhs of rupees from Senji. Accordingly, the Nawab sent his messenger Todarmal to the court of Senji. The messenger handed over the *firman* but the young Desing became irritated and threw down the paper in contempt of authority. Taking this as an insult, the Nawab decided to punish the chief. At the command of the forces and supported by several chieftains, he reached Arani. Attempts at avoiding a conflict failed. Yet Desing, who was aged twenty two years, took leave of his young wife, crossed the Varahanadi in flood and engaged the forces in a determined struggle. After an initial victory he

marched against the main army of the Nawab. Desing died fighting at Kadalimalai near Senji and his wife committed sati. Sadat-ul-lah Khan now entered the fort and re-established the Moghul authority. Out of respect for the memory of the wife of Desing, he built a town near Arcot and named it Ranipettai. The gallantry displayed by the daring but rash Rejput youth against the army of the Nawab is immortalized in one of the popular ballads in Tamil, *Desinga Rajan Kathai*.[15]

Moghul Conquest of Madurai

In 1732 when Vijaya Ranga Chokkanatha (1689-1732), the ruler of Madurai, died, there broke out disturbances in the country. Leaving no issue, he bequeathed the kingdom to his favourite wife, Minakshi. But the other windows, seven in number, determined to follow their departed husband and to escape from the control of a queen, whom they detested, committed sati. The accession of a queen incapable of coping with the critical situation excited internal disorders. The troubles assumed serious proportions, when the brothers of the queen, Venkata Nayaka and Perumal Nayaka, the ministers in the new regime, expelled or imprisoned several influential officials on charges of corruption and embezzlement of public funds. This measure was, no doubt, aimed at the improvement of the administration, but it annoyed the expelled officials. Guided by Naranappa Iyer, they entered into a daring plot with Bangaru Tirumalai, a cousin of the late rajah, and the poligars. They decided to capture Tiruchirapalli, the capital city, by a surprise attack and to enthrone Bangaru. The plot, however, fizzled out, as the queen's party discovered it right on time. Bangaru escaped to the south and the queen strengthened her position by removing all suspects from the administration and by enlisting more troops in her service. Yet the fear that the Moghuls would lend their support to Bangaru, had so much haunted the queen that she obtained recognition of her title by Safdar Ali, the commander of the Moghul army, sent by Nawab Dost Ali of Arcot, by means of

15. C. S. Srinivasachari, *A History of Gingee and its Rulers*, pp. 351-436.

a present, it is stated, of three lakhs of rupees [16]

Bangaru in the mean time organised a rival government at Madurai, declared himself rajah and appointed Naranappa Iyer as his minister. He assembled an army and prepared to storm Tiruchirapalli in cooperation with the feudatory chieftains and the Rajah of Mysore. In a bid to counter this threat the queen entered into a close alliance with Thanjavur. The formation of these alliances virtually split the powers of the Tamil Country into hostile camps. The two sides appeared almost equally powerful, the balance of power resting with the Nawab's army.

In 1733 Bangaru and Naranappa Iyer at the command of their forces marched from Madurai to Tiruchirapalli. The troops of Mysore in accordance with a pre-determined design advanced to the Nayak capital from the west. Despite this two pronged challenge, the queen's army acted energetically. It defeated the forces of Bangaru and, then turning to the north scattered the Mysoreans. This ended the first round of battle in favour of the queen. The struggle was soon renewed when Naranappa Iyer reassembled his dispersed forces and moved towards Dindigul. The queen's army marched to interrupt the progress of the enemy, but was compelled to withdraw when a powerful army from Mysore cornered on Tiruchirapalli. Now Naranappa Iyer opened a correspondence from a position of strength and induced the queen to appoint him as her minister, recognise prince Vijayakumara, the son of Bangaru, as heir to the throne and assign a district to Bangaru for his support. Naranappa Iyer gave a large present to Safdar Ali and won his approval for the settlement. Indeed the terms appeared very reasonable for they satisfied the interests of both the parties. The queen retained the right to continue in power, while Bangaru's partisan and son obtained the right to become the minister and successor respectively

16. L. Besse, *Father Beschi, His Times and His writings*, Tiruchirapalli. 1819, p. 125.

and Bangaru stood to gain control of a district. In addition the settlement averted the possibility of any immediate foreign intervention in this conflict of the Nayaks.

However, the settlement was not worked out. Bangaru, who was away at Madurai, on hearing the settlement, reached Tiruchirapalli and repudiated it. In his endeavour to gain possession of the throne he unwittingly played into the hands of the Nawab's general. He offered a handsome present, it is said, thirty lakhs of rupees to Safdar Ali and purchased his support. The Moghul general now abandoning the cause of the queen, decided to capture the fort. However, as he doubted his ability to accomplish this task, he assumed the role of a mediator, heard the complaints from the parties and after a show of investigation announced his predetermined decision. He declared that Bangaru was entitled to the crown and Minakshi to respectable treatment. It cannot be denied that the arbitrator's decision was arbitrary, fot it not only violated the recognition, that he extended to the queen's title, but also was weighed in favour of Bangaru because of the present he received. No wonder the queen ignored the verdict. Yet Safdar Ali proclaimed Bangaru as the king of Madurai in 1733. Before a final settlement of this dispute was effected, he returned to Arcot, after entrusting the command of the forces with his brother-in-law, Chanda Sahib.[17] The two rival governments - the queen's at Tiruchirapalli and Bangaru's at Madurai continued to exist.

To Chanda Sahib the situation turned more promising, when Bangaru, strengthened by the decision of Safdar Ali in his favour, threatened to storm the fort of Tiruchirapalli. Much alarmed, Minakshi appealed to Chanda Sahib for aid. In return for a present of one crore of rupees the Nevayet general consented to render military support. The inconsis-

17. The Annual Letter of the Madura Mission for 1773, *Father Beschi. His Times and His Writings*, pp. 129-130 and *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 46 pp. 218-219.

tency in the attitude of the Nevayets glaringly revealed itself; still the belligerents carried on the struggle. As the threat to the fort appeared real, the queen after obtaining an oath from Chanda Sahib of faithful support, admitted a body of his troops into it for defence. But the oath was a false one, made on a false Qoran. The deceitful Chanda Sahib, when he took the oath, substituted a brick in the same splendid covering in which the Qoran was usually wrapped.[18] The queen suspected no deceit, but she was led into a cardinal error of admitting the forces of an adventurer into the solitary strong hold in her possession. Perhaps it was an error impossible for her to avoid in the face of the worsening situation. Chanda Sahib without giving any ground for suspicion attacked and dispersed the forces of Bangaru in co-operation with the troops of the queen and the rajah of Thanjavur. Among the prisoners of war were Bangaru who was sent to Arcot and Naranappa Iyer who was handed over to the queen and subsequently put to death.[19] Rajah Tukkoji of Thanjavur in return for his services obtained possession of the districts of Koilody and Elangad from Madurai. It appeared that the civil war ended and that the queen regained her ascendancy.

After his victory over Bangaru, Chanda Sahib marched to the far South with the declared objective of reducing the whole country to the queen's sway. But the Kallars and the poligars intercepted him at Natham and forced his retreat. Eager to retrieve his tarnished prestige and taking advantage of an opportunity, created by a bitter conflict of the Tanjoreans with the Kallar and Marava powers, Chanda Sahib invaded Thanjavur in 1734 and forced Rajah Tukkoji to pay a large contribution.[20]

With the booty that he collected from Thanjavur, Chanda

18. M. Wilks, *History of Mysore*, Part I, Madras, 1907, p 155.
19. *Father Beschi, His Times and His Writings*, p 155.
20. Annual letter of the Madura Mission 14th July 1735, *Father Beschi*, pp. 135-137.

Sahib went to Arcot; but in January 1736 he returned to Tiruchirapalli with Bangaru and a large army. Now he revealed his ominous designs. In flagrant violation of his solemn assurance and in co-operation with the forces, which he already got admitted into the fort, he launched a surprise attack and took the fort. He promptly imprisoned the queen and enthroned Bangaru, with the empty title of 'king'. This revolution of 1736 terminated the Nayak administration of Madurai and started the Nawab's rule. After consolidating his victory at Tiruchirapalli, Chanda Sahib took the field against other powers. He invaded Thanjavur a second time and levied a large contribution. Advancing to the west, he occupied certain territories, occupied by the ruler of Mysore from Madurai.

The Nayaks in the mean time rallied their strength and proclaimed Vijayakumara as the king at Madurai. On hearing this development Chanda Sahib adroitly enthroned Minakshi and sent a powerful army in her name against the rival government. Govindaiya and Ravanaiya, who commanded this expedition, obtained a free passage through the defiles of Kallar Nadu by means of presents or threats and made their way to Madurai. They attacked and defeated the troops of Vijayakumara and occupied the city. Bangaru, joining his son near Madurai, made his last stand at Ammaya Nayakkanur but was overwhelmed. The father and the son, reaping the harvest of their intrigues, escaped to Sivaganga for safety. In this misfortune the Marava chiefs came to their rescue by assigning a few villages for their support. Chanda Sahib wanted to capture the fugitives, but for fear of a conflict with the Maravas observed restraint.[21] Finding no serious obstacle to his assumption of the direct control of the country, he deposed the queen and declared himself the Nawab of Madurai in the name of the imperial Moghuls. The unfortunate Minakshi overwhelmed with frustration and despondency committed suicide.[22]

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 148 154
22. *Ibid.* p. 157.

Burhan Ibn Hasan, the chronicler of the Wallajahs, rightly condemns Chanda Sahib that he went to Tiruchirapalli in the name of peace-maker and span the thread of relationship of a brother, swearing on the word of Allah, but broke the covenant and took possession of the fort.[23] True that the general cannot be exonerated, for treachery was permitted to have its role. Yet the importance of the acquisition for the Nawab was indeed considerable. On the one hand, it marked the extinction of the Nayak kingdom after two centuries of its existence, and on the other, it led to the expansion of the Carnatic to Tirunelveli.

The Marathas vs the Nizam

In this helpless situation Bangaru appealed to the Marathas of Poona for aid. The prominent Hindu powers, Mysore, the Maravas and Pundukkottai - too, called upon the Marathas for intervention, offering their co-operation for the expulsion of the Nawab's army from Madurai.[24] The Marathas saw in these developments an opportunity for the advancement of their own interests. Therefore they moved a large army to the Carnatic. The Marathas and the Nevayets fought a major battle in 1740 at Damalcheruvu. Raghuji Bhonsle and Fateh Singh, the commanders of the expedition, defeated and slew Dost Ali, the Moghul Nawab of the Carnatic.[25] In March 1741 the Marathas advanced to the south and took Tiruchirapalli by escalade.[26] They appointed Murari Rao of Gooty as their governor of Madurai and returned to Maharashtra with Chanda Sahib as prisoner in their camp.

The Maratha expedition resulted in the re-establishment

23. M. Husayn Nainar (ed)., *Burhan Ibin Hasan's Tuzak-i-Walajahi*, Madras 1939, Part I, p. 70.

24. According to a report from a spy at Arcot the King of Mysore offered to pay fifty lakhs of rupees to the Marathas as a price for the restoration of Hindu government at Tiruchirapalli. Public Country Correspondence, 5 December 1740, Vol. 1, p. 65.

25. J. F. Price (ed), *Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. I., Madras, 1934, p. 118.

of Hindu rule at Tiruchirapalli. It was however not of the Nayaks but of the Marathas. The overthrow of the Nawab's rule revived the fallen hopes of the Nayaks. Bangaru and his son Vijayakumara requested the Maratha chiefs to recognise their rights to the kingdom, but this was in vain.[27] Appaji Rao, a lieutenant of Murari Rao, extended Maratha authority to the southern territories.

In 1743 the tide of events turned against the Marathas. Asaf Jah, the Nizam of Hyderabad, at the command of a formidable army advanced to Arcot and asserted his overlordship over the Carnatic. In March he attacked Tiruchirapalli and occupied it after a prolonged siege.[28] This victory of the Nizam terminated the Maratha rule and restored the possesion of Madurai to his Nawab at Arcot. In the transition of power from the Marathas to the Moghuls the nayaks found another chance to make a bid to regain the lost ground. Both Bangaru and his son Vijayakumara paid a visit to the Nizam at Tiruchirapallia and appealed for the restoration of the country. They offered to pay thirty lakhs of rupees as compensation for the expenses of his campaign and three lakhs as the annual tribute, as they did to Raghuji Bhonsle. When the Nizam returned to Hyderabad, they accompanied him upto Arcot, but nothing turned out. Anwar-ud-din, the new Nawab at Arcot, promised the restoration of the country on the re-establishment of order and granted a daily allowance of 300 pagodas[29] to Bangaru. Thereupon Bangaru joined the service of the Nawab and assisted him for the establishment of order in Arcot. But as days passed on, the excited hopes of the nayak chief failed, for he was poisoned to death. On hearing the tragic death of his father Vijayakumara

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 161-162.

27. The Telugu chronicles on the Nayaks mention that Fateh Singh promised to restore the kingdom to Bangaru on paying thirty lakhs of rupees as war indemnity and three lakhs as anuual tribute. Bangaru agreed to do so and gave it in writing. *Indian Antiquary* Vol. 46, p. 243. Still the Marathas did not restore the country.

28. Price (ed) *Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, Vol. 1, p. 243

29. A gold coin, pagoda was exchanged for three rupees normally.

escaped to the woods of Sivaganga [30]

Maravas and Fallen Nayaks

On the outbreak of the Second Carnatic War (1749-1754) Vijayakumara discovered an opportunity to seek the recovery of Madurai. Released from prison by the Marathas, Chanda Sahib appeared as a rival to Nawab Anwar-ud-din. Afrer defeating and killing the Nawab at Ambur, he sent an expedition to the far South. Alam Khan, who commanded the army, occupied the fort of Madurai from the troops of Anwar-ud-din. As the invader possibly wanted to win the support of the inhabitants, he crowned Vijayakumara as the 'king' of the country. The new ruler, however, exercised nothing more than nominal powers. When Alam Khan left Madurai to join Chanda Sahib at Tiruchirapalli, he appointed Mudemiah as his successor. Mudemiah served as minister of Vijayakumara for a few months. Subsequently he, at the instructions of Chanda Sahib, sought to depose the prince, but he could not effect it as the Maravas shielded the nayaks. Yet when Mudemiah plotted to seize Vijayakumara the latter attributing his misfortunes to the influence of an inauspicious star retired to the jungles of Sivaganga in 1751.

In 1752 Nanja Rajah, general of Mysore, by virtue of an alliance with Mohammad Ali against Chanda Sahib, sent an expedition under Khub Sahib to Madurai and occupied it from Miana, the successor of Mudemiah. Unwisely Khub Sahib offended the sentiments of the people by killing cows and cutting down coconut trees - objects of Hiudu veneration. In December the inhabitants of Madurai rose in rebellion. The Marava forces, joining the standard of insurrection, stormed the city and crowned Vijayakumara. The country again witnessed a return of the nayak rule.[31] The nayak administration,

30. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 46, pp. 244-246 and Burhan's *Tuzaki-i-Walajahi*, Part I, p. 70 foot notes.

31. S. C. Hill, *Yusuf Khan, The Rebel Commandant*, London, 1914, pp. 26-41.

however, did not last for long. Soon after the withdrawal of the Marava forces, Miana overthrew the nayaks from power and re-established his rule. Vijayakumara again fled to Sivaganga. The Marava forces marched to Madurai a second time and defeated the forces of Miana, but made no attempt to restore the country to the nayaks. On the other hand, they forced Miana to accept Marava hegemony.[32] In 1754 the poligars of Madurai made a representation to the English in favour of the restoration of the country to the nayaks.[33] Thomas Saunders, the Governor of Fort St. George, took interest in the suggestion, as it offered the prospect of gaining the loyalty of the poligars, but Nawab Mohammad Ali refused his concurrence.[34] In 1777 Minakshi Nayak, an emissary of Vijayakumara, waited upon Governor Lord Pigot of Madras to seek his aid for the re-establishment of the nayak administration yet nothing followed. The death of Vijayakumara in the same year synchronised with the end of the long struggle made by the nayaks to regain possession of the lost territory.[35]

What contributed to the fall of the nayaks were their factional rivalry, alienation of the Tamils and external wars. Unity and leadership, needed for their political survival, failed at the critical period. Minakshi made an earnest endeavour to improve the administration but her want of sagacity in dealing with the problems and in curbing the opposition aggravated the crisis. Bangaru, in his relentless pursuit of power, relegated public interest to the background and in the process invited his doom and sealed the fate of the kingdom. Having lost the control of the situation the fugitive nayaks made futile entreaties to the successful invaders for the restoration of the country. As a foreign power, the nayaks sought to advance

32. T. Rajaram Rao, (ed.). *Ramnad Manual*, Madras, 1933, p. 238.
33. Military Country Correspondence Madras, 20 January, 1754, Vol. 1, pp. 74-77.
34. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 4 February, 1754, Vol. 3, pp. 36-37.
35. Indian Antiquary, Vol. 46, p. 274.

their communal and linguistic interests at the expense of the local Tamils. They occupied the lands from the Tamil population by violence, subjected them to forced labour and excluded them from the administration. As a result they had to fight against the Kallars, Maravas, Nadars and Paravas. This policy, that was so suicidal to their interests, created such a state of hostility with the masses that it quickly led them to ruin. Mysore, Thanjavur and the Muslim power exploited the opportunities presented by internal conflicts to wrest possession of territories from the Telugus.

Chapter VII

BEGINNINGS OF EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

The Europeans made their appearance on the Coast of Tamil Nadu during the Vijayanagar period. The first to reach were the Portuguese and they were followed by the Dutch, the Danes, the English and the French. This was not an isolated phenomenon in the history of South India, but a feature that was common with the Indies. Disintegration of the Vijayanagar Empire and the internal conflicts among the local powers presented problems as well as opportunities for the European merchants. They presented problems because they could expect no single authority to deal with and no order in the land as to permit them to carry on their trade in a peaceful atmosphere. They found opportunities too, for they could play one power against the other and wrest concessions, commercial as well as political. Though the people lived in poverty, the fertile tracts in the country supplied a wide variety of vegetables, fruits, rice and fish. Towns which were numerous not only manufactured the finest of cotton goods but also served as markets for cotton, timber, gold and precious stones.

The Europeans needed spices, cloves, pepper, indigo, pearls, silk, calico and a variety of other goods. In the sale of these products they saw the possibility of reaping huge profits. However they found obstacles to their commerce in the simplicity and frugality that marked the life of the Tamils. It was through consistent and patient endeavours that they could change habits so as to enable the Tamils to excite an interest in the items of trade that the world at large produced.

The Portuguese on the Coast

In 1498 the Portuguese vessels reached Kozhikode on the Malabar Coast. They acquired Goa in 1510 and made it their headquarters in India. This was followed by the esta-

blishment of settlements along the East Coast. What the Portuguese aimed at was no large territorial possession, for their resources did not permit it, but the control of the eastern market through alliances with the princes and establishment of isolated posts. They gave equal importance to religious enterprise too; for they extended their support to the Jesuits for the conversion of the people to Catholicism.

The Portuguese formed a settlement at San Thome in 1522. To begin with their interest was religious, for they wanted to build a church at the place, where St. Thomas was believed to have been killed. Gasper Correa recorded that in 1507 Francisco de Almeida, the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa, having heard from local Christians that there existed a chapel of St. Thomas on the East Coast, sent his men to trace it out. On the basis of their report, two Portuguese visited a church that was believed to be the sepulcre of St. Thomas. At the orders of the king of Portugal, the Church was rebuilt and walls were erected. However, in later years the walls were washed away by the waves.[1] Before long, they made it a trading settlement too. In Senji they established a settlement at Porto Novo and developed it into a sea port. During the administration of the Nayak chief, Sevappa Nayaka of Thanjavur, they settled at Nagapatnam, which grew into a large town. Father Pimenta who visited the place in 1597 recorded: "many Portugals dwell there and many winter there, which came from the coast of China, Bengla, Pegu and Malacca." However, it was in the southern coast that the Portuguese made considerable gains. The Paravas, an industrious people, greatly contributed to the resources of the Vijayanagar Empire. Yet they were oppressed by the Telugu rulers and were left at the mercy of the other communities. Frequently there were clashes between the Paravas and the Muslims, and in one of them about 7000 people died. As the Emperors of Vijayanagar refused protection, they appealed to the Portuguese at Cochin for help. In response the Portuguese reached

1. H. D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, pp. 217-291.

the fishery coast in 1583 and after having made themselves masters of the port towns, won over the allegiance of the Paravas. All in one day the Paravas received baptism, accepted Christianity and recognized Portuguese jurisdiction. This made Tutukudi, a port town with some 50,000 people in 1700, a strong hold of their influence.[2]

However, what altered their situation were their conflicts with the Nayaks and the Dutch. The forces of Vijayanagar raided their settlement in the fishery coast. Raghunatha Nayaka of Thanjavur undertook an expedition in support of his ally the ruler of Jaffna against the Portuguese. Though it ended in failure, the Portuguese lost their influence in Thanjavur. The Dutch occupied Nagapatnam and other settlements by 1658 and gained control of the market on the East Coast.[3] As a result of these developments the Portuguese influence declined in Tamil Nadu.

The Dutch and the Danes

The Dutch and the Danes appeared on the Coast as the bitter rivals to the Portuguese. Enterprizing and cosmopolitan in their outlook and directed by their nation to build forts and make alliances with the Asiatic powers, the Dutch challenged Portuguese supremacy from a position of strength. Their early experiences in the Tamil Country were disappointing but as the result of determined endeavour they asserted their influence in several areas.

In 1595 they set out with a fleet of four vessels, reached the Malabar Coast and from there sent their ships to the East Coast. With the permission of Krishnappa Nayaka of Senji, they in 1608 built a factory at Devanampatnam, which later on became an English settlement as Fort St. David. In 1610 they acquired possession of Pulicat from the local Nayak and made it their stronghold. However, because of

2. C. S. Srinivasachari, *A History of Gingee and Its Rulers*, p. 296.
3. R. Sathyanatha Iyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, p. 154.

Portuguese intrigues against them, Emperor Venkata I directed the Nayak of Senji to destroy their fort at Devanampatnam. The English records refer to the raid by the Nayak troops and demolition of this settlement.[4] Subsequently they again approached Krishnappa Nayaka for permission to settle at Devanampatnam and Porto Novo but it was refused. Disappointed at this, the Dutch decided to retaliate in strength. They defeated the Portuguese fleet in the Battle of Malacca in 1606 and subdued the rival settlements, including Nagapatnam and Tutukudi. In 1689 they made Nagapatnam the capital of their possessions in India. They fortified their settlements, maintained their finances efficiently and gained large profits.[5] However, in later years they indulged in slave trade and entered into intrigues in the courts. These made them unpopular. Due to British opposition in India and scope for lucrative trade in the East Indies, they gradually withdrew from the Tamil Coast and moved to the East Indies.

King Christian IV of Denmark sent his Danes to Thanjavur in 1620. Ove Geede founded a settlement at Tarangambadi, which they called as Danesborg. Motivated by commercial as well as religious considerations, they entered into trade and founded the Danish Lutheran Mission.[6] The Lutherans erected churches and presented a powerful challenge to the missionary activity of the Jesuits. However, as the supply of money and arrival of ships from their home country became irregular, they lost their influence as well as interest.

Advent of the English

In 1600 the English East India Company obtained a royal charter for trade with the Indies. It made a vigorous attempt to seize trade but encountered difficulties because of internal rivalry and European machinations. Thwarted in their

4. T. I. Poonen, *The Dutch Beginnings in India*, pp. 75-76.
5. Alexr Rea, *Monumental Remains of the Dutch East India Company in the Presidency of Madras*, Madras, 1897., p. 23.
6. V. Vriddhagirisan, *The Nayaks of Tanjore*, p. 179.

endeavour to establish a profitable trade with Konkan, the Malabar and the East Indies, they turned to coastal Tamil Nadu and coastal Andhra, a region which lay remote from the spheres of rival influence. This manifested into a land of promise, for it unfolded vast opportunities, both commercial and political. The country produced what they needed and lacked the unity that would have rendered their efforts difficult. In consequence the English established numerous settlements all along the Coast. Because of the opposition of Golkonda and the Dutch at Masulipatam, Francis Day sailed to the south and obtainep a grant in 1639 from Damerla Venkatappa, the Nayak of Poonamalle under Emperor Venkata III, for the construction of a settlement and a fort in or around Madraspatnam. He found the place full of sand and mud with no scenic beauty, yet with good anchorage for ships. A small fort erected in 1640 was enlarged subsequently and was called Fort St. George.[7] The English obtained confirmation of their right to possess Madras from the Rajah of Chandragiri, the Emperor of Vijayanagar and the Sultan of Golkonda in return for the payment of annual rent. Through its rapid growth from a settlement of traders and sea men to a city of Tamils and Telugus, Madras overshadowed the cities of Kanchi, Vellore and Arcot. In 1653 Fort St. George was made a separate presidency, independent of Bentam in the Indies. Aaron Baker was appointed the first Governor. In 1654 it was made the headquarters of the English on the Coromandel Coast.[8]

Thomas Yale, Governor of Fort St. George, negotiated

7. R. Sathyanatha Iyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, p. 25.
8. Francis Day selected the spot because of strategic and commercial considerations. According to tradition, he had a girl friend of Portuguese descent at San Thome. As he wanted to be at a place close to her house, he decided on the site. To begin with Madras had only some fifteen huts of fishermen. Before long it grew into importance and Nawab Mohammad Ali shifted his residence there. It is believed that the word Madraspatnam is derived from Madraskuppam called after Maddarazu or Madda Raju and Chennapatnam called arter Chennappa-both Telugu chieftains. (W. Foster, *Founding of the Fort St. George*, p. 13.)

with Raja Ram, the Maratha ruler of Senji, for the acquisition of Fort St. David. He gave a liberal bribe to the Brahmin minister and obtained a grant for Fort St. David and Cuddalore.[9] Situated near Pondicherry, Fort St. David developed into a promising settlement. The English envinced an interest to build factories in Thanjavur but abandoned the idea as the local rulers appeared very greedy and European rivalry seemed formidable. It was only in 1749 that they acquired Devokottai. They defeated the Portuguese and the Dutch and established their ascendancy over rival European powers. Queen Mangammal of Madurai invited the English to establish their settlements at Kayal, the sea port near Tutukudi, and at Attingal on the West Coast. The queen of Attingal sent tribute to Madurai but she defaulted because of Dutch support to her. Mangammal wanted to play the English against the Dutch. Due to the prospect of trade in pepper the English took some interest in Attingal but for fear of Dutch rivalry declined the offer.[10]

As trade increased in volume and profits exceeded the limits of expectations, the British grew confident in their strength and developed political ambitions. As early as in 1687 the Company announced its resolve to "Establish such a polity of civil and military power and create and secure such a large revenue . . .as may be the foundation of a large, well grounded sure English dominion in India for all time to come". No wonder this major shift in policy from commercial to political had its impact upon the Tamil Country.

Arrival of the French

In 1664 largely because of the initiative taken by Colbert, the Minister of King Louis XIV of France, the French East India Company for trade with the East came into existence. Granted power to conquer and occupy territories, the Company made a determined bid to emerge into a political power. In 1674 they

9. C. S. Srinivasachari, *A History of Gingee and Its Rulers*, p. 273.
10. Madras Council, Public Despatches to England, 1694, p. 126.

acquired possession of Pondicherry from the Sultan of Bijapur and made it their capital in India. At a later period in 1739 the French Governor, Dumas in alliance with Chanda Sahib, forced king Sahuji of Thanjavur to cede Karaikkal to the Company. Obsessed with political ambitions, the French neglected trade and entangled themselves into wars with Indian and other European powers.[11] As the political fortune failed, commercial decay followed.

In fact all the major European powers had their commercial and political interest in Tamil Nadu. As merchants they engaged themselves in export trade as well as inland trade. They exported cotton products, slaves, pepper and salt petre. At the same time they sold woollen products, tents, bricks and grain, mostly obtained from different parts of India. Their strongholds-San Thome, Nagapatnam, Tarangambadi, Madras and Pondicherry were located in the Tamil Country. Surrounded by the major Indian powers of the times, Mysore, the Marathas and the Nizam, the Tamil Country acquired a strategic importance of great magnitude. For, control of this territory apeared essential not only to deal with the rival European powers but also with the Indian powers from a position of strength. No wonder in the subsequent period it was transformed into a cockpit of intrigue and conflict.

11. G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India*, pp. 15-71.

THE NEVAYETS AND THE WALLAJAHS

The establishment of European influence coincided with the decline of the Moghul Empire and rise of independent powers. Taking advantage of the disintegration of the Moghul Empire, Sadat-ul-lah Khan, the Nawab of Arcot, asserted his independence at Arcot. He founded the rule of his house, the Nevayets, on a hereditary basis. The Nevayets consolidated their authority with the extension of their sway over the Tamil Country.[1] In 1722 Sadat-ul-lah-Khan was succeeded by his nephew Dost Ali. Embarking upon a policy of annexation, Dost Ali in 1732 sent an army of 12,000 men under the joint command of his son, Safdar Ali and his son-in-law, Chanda Sahib on an expedition to the deep South. This led to the annexation of Madurai in 1736. Safdar Ali turned in the mean time against Thanjavur. In 1739 he imprisoned Sayaji, the Maratha ruler of the kingdom, and enthroned Pratap Singh, son of an illegitimate father, Tukkoji. As a result the Nevayets established their influence over Arcot, Madurai and Thanjavur. The north western region which included Coimbatore, Salem and Dindigul formed part of Mysore.

Maratha Expedition

Confronted with a critical situation, Bangaru of Madurai and Sayaji of Thanjavur appealed to the Marathas of Poona for aid. Sahu, the ruler of the Marathas, was moved by the fate of Sayaji, who belonged to his own house.[3] Besides, the Hindu powers of the South-Mysore, the Maravas and Pudukkottai-called upon the Marathas for intervention, offering their co-operation for the expulsion of the Moghuls from the

1. M. H. Nainar, (ed), *Tuzak-i-Walajahi*, Madras, 1939, Part 1, pp. 58-64.
2. Press List of Ancient Dutch Records, p. 26.
3. Pratap Singh of Tanjore, Letter to the Madras Council, received on 9th March 1702, Military Country Correspondence, Vol 10 pp. 64-69.

deep South.[4] Asaf Jah, the Nizam of Hyderabad, too induced the Marathas to undertake an expedition to the far South. Angered at the Nevayet acquisition of territories without his approval, but prevented by the political intrigues at Delhi, he left it to the Marathas to take the defiant Nawab to task.[5] The Marathas on the other hand wanted to utilise the opportunity to collect the taxes, *chout* and *sardeshumukhi*.[6] However, the positive factor which invited the Maratha intervention was the dissension among the Nevayets. The establishment of an independent kingdom at Tiruchirapalli by Chanda Sahib and the intervention in Thanjavur by Safdar Ali precipitated a bitter rivalry between these generals. The old Nawab Dost Ali after leaving the administration of the country to those who struggled for it, devoted himself to religion.[7] This rivalry between the two Nevayet factions invited external aggression.

In May 1740 the Marathas descended upon the Tamil Country. Two generals, Raghuji Bhonsle and Fateh Singh, commanded 40,000 to 50,000 horses, the flower of the Maratha army.[8] The sudden appearance of the enemy spread consternation throughout the country. Dost Ali sent an urgent message to Safdar Ali, who was away in Thanjavur, for aid. The alarming news reached Chanda Sahib while he was about to start from Tiruchirapalli for attending a marriage at Arcot. Before Safdar Ali and Chanda Sahib could mobilise their forces

4. According to a report from a spy at Arcot the king of Mysore offered to pay fifty lakhs of rupees to the Marathas as a price for the restoration of Hindu rule at Tiruchirapalli.

5. Ghulam Mohammad, Letter to Madras Council, received on 13th May 1740, Public Country Correspondence, Vol. 1, p. 14.

6. Radhakrishna Aiyar, *A General History of the Pudukkottai State*, p. 182 *Chout* was one-fourth of the income, while *Sardeshmukhi* one tenth.

7. Madras Council, Public Consultations, Madras, July 1735, Vol. 65, p. 147.

8 *Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, Vol. I, p. 118.
Sahu (1708-49), the son of Sambhaji, after he was released from Moghul prison, crowned himself at Satara,

for the defence of the country, the old Nawab at the command of his troops marched to the north and entrenched himself near Chandragiri. On 20th May the Marathas attacked the lines of the Nawab, slew Dost Ali and his son, Hasan Ali, and routed their forces. The victorious army promptly marched to Arcot. This was one of the major victories that the Marathas won over the rival powers.

In the mean time Safdar Ali and Chanda Sahib marched from Thanjavur and Tiruchirapalli respectively towards Arcot. On the eve of his departure, Safdar Ali after receiving a present released Sayaji from prison. On hearing the fall of the Nawab he retired to the strong fort of Vellore. Chanda Sahib joined Safdar Ali at Vellore. Both the chiefs, forgetting their differences under the stress of a common danger, concerted ways and means for the expulsion of the intruders. Expecting to win the support of the French, they proceeded to Pondicherry, but did not receive any. After spending a few days at the French settlement, the two chiefs left for Senji, from where Safdar Ali marched towards Arcot, while Chanda Sahib returned to Tiruchirapalli.[9] Safdar Ali found the Marathas abandoned to the excitement of plunder. He opened negotiations and entered into a settlement by which he agreed to pay them one crore of rupee if they evacuated Arcot. By a secret article of the settlement he promised to give a present of four lakhs of rupees to the Marathas for the suppression of the regime of Chanda Sahib at Tiruchirapalli.[10] He also granted them permission to take possession of Tiruchirapalli for themselves.[11] Queen Minakshi was betrayed by Chanda Sahib and the latter by Safdar Ali. According to the terms, the Marathas evacuated Arcot and

9. G. S. Sardesai in his *New History of the Marathas* (Vol. 2. pp. 254-55) states that Chanda Sahib quietly waited at Tiruchirapalli watching the turn of events. But this is not true to facts.

10. Public Country Correspondence, Madras, Vol. I, p. 11, A Vakeel at Arcot to Madras Council, received on 4th May 1740.
Chanda Sahib instead of remaining quietly at Tiruchirapalli marched to join the Nawab. (Diary Vol. I, pp. 134-158.)

11, Defence of Lord Pigot, London, 1777, p 16.

Safdar Ali crowned himself the Nawab.

The Marathas halted near Tiruvannamalai and quietly spent the monthe of October and November, pretending to realise the amount due from Safdar Ali but really for plundering the town on the commencement of the *Kartigai*, a temple festival which attracted lakhs of devotees. At the right moment they fell upon the town and captured a rich booty. Equipped themselves with abundant provisions and reinforced by 10,000 horses of Murari Rao, the Maratha chief of Gooty, they marched on Tiruchirapalli in February 1741.[12] In anticipation of the Maratha expedition Chanda Sahib sent his family away to Pondicherry and posted parties at strategic places. He made an appeal to the French for aid,[13] but it did not evoke any response. On reaching a striking distance from Tiruchirapalli Raghuji Bhonsle delivered an ultimatum to the Nevayet ruler directing him to send a handsome present, failing which to face retaliation[14] Chanda Sahib on his part offered to pay seven lakhs of rupees, but warned the Marathas of his readiness to fight them if they rejected his offer.[15] Dissatisfied with the meagre offer, Raghuji Bhonsle decided on a trial of strength.

An advance party of the Marathas marched to Tiruchirapalli but suffered a reverse in a battle with the forces of Chanda Sahib.[16] Yet the main body of the Maratha cavalry took positions near the fort and cut off its communications. At this critical juncture a large body of the Nevayet troops under Budda Sahib hurried from Madurai for the defence of the northern borders. The Marathas sought to intercept the

12. Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Vol. 1, p, 125.
13. *Idid*, p. 116.
14. A report from Senji to Madras Council, received on 11th August, 1740, Public Country Correspondence, Vol. I, p. 15.
15. A letter from Arcot to Madras Conncil, received on 5th December 1740, Public Country Correspondence, Vol. 1, p, 15.
16. A report from Arcot to Madras Council, 26th December, 1740, Public Country Correspondence, Vol. 1, p. 89.

march of Budda Sahib, but failed. Reaching Dindigul and acting in co-operation with his brother Sadak Sahib, Budda Sahib engaged the Marathas and defeated them. Losing no time the two brothers rushed to Tiruchirapalli, but Raghuji Bhonsle intercepted their march at Manaparal. In a fierce battle which lasted for nine hours the Marathas won. Budda Sahib and Sadak Sahib died fighting and each camp lost more than 3,000 men killed.[17] This decisive victory of the Marathas considerably helped their siege of Tiruchirapalli. Despite the formidable odds, Chanda Sahib defended his strong hold for more than a month, after which he surrendered. On the 16th of March 1741 the Marathas scaled the ramparts, surprised the exhausted garrison and took possession of the fort. Chanda Sahib now offered to pay twelve lakhs of rupees for his safe departure, but Raghuji Bhonsle demanded one crore. As nothing turned out of the proposals, the victors carried away the Nevayet general together with his son Abid Ali as prisoners to Berar and then to Satara.[18] Raghuji Bhonsle appointed Murari Rao as the ruler of the conquered territory. This marked the end of the Nevayet regime in Tiruchirapalli.

The Maratha expedition to the Tamil Country relieved Thanjavur from the threat of extinction. After the evacuation of the Nevayets from the kingdom, Sayaji ascended the throne but soon he was replaced by Pratap Singh. The invaders, eager to obtain a reward for their service, advanced to the bank of the Kaveri and demanded the payment of one crore of rupees. In the levy of contribution the Marathas in fact made no distinction between enemies and kinsmen. Pratap Singh, perhaps because of his fear that they would lend their support to his rival Sayaji, agreed to pay the amount and handed over his minister Govinda Rao as security.[19] Satisfied with this arrangement, the Marathas withdrew from the king-

17. *The Diary*, Vol. I, p. 152.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. pp. 161-162.
19. Nawab, Letter to Madras Council dated 17th July 1762, Military Country Correspondence Vol. 10, p. 155.

dom.[20] From Tiruchirapalli Appaji Rao, a general of Murari Rao marched to the south and established his authority over Madurai. The Marathas revived worship in temples, won the support of local chieftains and consolidated their sway.[21] As a result of these developments the Marathas extended their rule to the far South.

Nizam's Expedition

However, an expedition by the Nizam of Hyderabad interrupted the progressive stabilisation of the Maratha regime. The cause of the expedition was his determination to reassert the Moghul authority over the Tamil Country, but the factor which helped his venture was the increasing dissensions among the Nevayets as well as among the Marathas.

The years that followed the defeat of Chanda Sahib were quite ominous in the history of the Nevayets. They lost the strategic stronghold and half of their dominion, besides the services of an able general. The exit of Chanda Sahib from the politics of the far South shot the imagination of persons of less note, of whom the most intriguing was Murtaza Ali, the ruler of Vellore and a brother-in-law of Safdar Ali. In the absence of the more influential Chanda Sahib he aimed at the acquisition of Arcot. Murtaza Ali found his chance in 1742 when Safdar Ali went to Vellore to attend a festival. This treacherous chief murdered his brother-in-law, while he was asleep and proceeding to Arcot, usurped the throne for himself. However, the forces of the late Nawab refusing to stand as idle spectators to a diabolic treachery, mutinied, expelled the usurper from the capital and enthroned Seid Mohammad, the infant son of the late Nawab, with the name of Sadat-ullah Khan II.[22] The assassination of Safdar Ali left the Nevayets leaderless; the new Nawab was only an infant. This struggle

20. Robert Sewell, *The Historical Inscriptions of Southern India*, Delhi, 1960, p. 297.
21. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 46, p. 243.
22. Wilks, *History of Mysore*, Part I, pp. 157-158.

for power which weakened the Nevayets strangely coincided with a similar development among the Marathas. Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao and Raghuji Bhonsle entered into a keen contest for leadership, which ultimately led to the victory of the former. This struggle so much engaged the attention of the Maratha powers that it left Murari Rao unsupported at Tiruchirapalli. The Nizam now decided to exploit the favourable circumstances at Arcot and Tiruchirapalli to his advantage.

Early in 1743 Asaf Jah the Nizam, at the command of a formidable army of 2,00,000 foot and 80,000 horse, marched unopposed to Arcot, re-established his authority and confirmed Sadat-ul-lah Khan II in the nawabship. He appointed his own nominee Khwaja Abdullah Khan as the guardian of the prince.[23] It was a wise measure, for he kept the Nevayets calm by preserving the status quo and at the same time obtained control of the administration through his nominee, who was appointed as the guardian of the prince.

In 1743 the Nizam moved to Vellore and from there to Tiruchirapalli. Murari Rao fought against the invader and defended the fort for six months. Ultimately, exhausted in his resources and abandoned by his Maratha allies, he agreed to evacuate the fort. In return the Nizam gave him two lakhs of rupees and recognized him as the ruler of Gooty and Penukonda. As a result, the Nizam gained possession of Tiruchirapalli and Madurai. He wanted to conquer Thanjavur but he found his army so exhausted that he returned to Hyderabad.[24]

Wallajah Usurpation

In 1744, when Khwaja Abdullah died, the Nizam appointed his general Anwar-ud-din as the guardian of Sadat-ul-lah Khan II.[25] Before long, however, tragedy overtook the ten

23. Burhan's *Tuzak-i-Walajhi*, Part I, p. 82.
24. K. R. Venkatarama Iyer (ed.), *Pudukkottai Manual*, Part I, p. 776.
25. *Tuzak-i-Walajhi*, Part I. p. 83.

years old prince. In June 1744 when Sadat-ul-lah Khan II was attending a marriage, he was stabbed to death in the very presence of Anwar-ud-din and Murtaza Ali.

Now Anwar-ud-din usurped power. The connivance of the two onlookers, Anwar-ud-din and Murtaza Ali, to this treacherous outrage cannot be wholly denied. Yet the Nizam, more interested in the preservation of his influence than in the punishment of the perpetrators of the murder, appointed Anwar-ud-din of the house of the Wallajahs as the next ruler. The rule of the Wallajahs began amidst the scenes of tragedies which swept the Nevayets out of power.[26]

26 M. Wilks, *History of Mysore*. Part I, p. 158.

CIVIL WARS AND EUROPEAN INTERVENTION

The success of Anwar-ud-din in obtaining the nawabship of Arcot marked the beginning of the Wallajah administration in the Tamil Country. In an attempt to consolidate his acquisition he embarked upon an offensive against the local powers. He made a limited progress in that direction, but failed because of the opposition of Chanda Sahib. There followed the Wallajah-Nevayet struggle for supremacy, marked by foreign interventions. This conflict coincided with the out break of a civil war in Thanjavur too.

Nawab Anwar-ud-din renamed Tiruchirapalli as Nathar Nagar in honour of a Sayyid saint, Hadrat Nathar Wali and built a beautiful mosque known as Masjid-i-Muhammadi and strengthened it with the reconstruction of the strategic fort.[1] He asserted his power in Madurai, defeated a confederacy of Tirunelveli poligars[2] and occupied Koilody and Elangad from Thanjavur.[3] However, the process of extension and consolidation of Wallajah influence suffered a serious check in consequence of the out break of civil wars in the Tamil Country. These wars broke out as Chanda Sahib appeared as a rival to Anwar-ud-din and Sayaji to Pratap Singh. In 1740 Sayaji assumed the government of Thanjavur, but he did not prove himself acceptable to the nobles. In 1742 the principal men by their general concurrence replaced him by Pratap Singh.[4] As a result there began in Thanjavur an internal struggle which invited external intervention. Since his deposition Sayaji sought the aid of King Sahu and Fateh Singh for recovering the throne

1. Burhan's *Tuzak-i-Walajahi*, Part I, p. 132.
2. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 12 June 1767, Vol. 15, p. 139.
3. *Diary of Anandaranga Pillai*, Vol. 5, p. 177.
4. Defence of Lord Pigot, 1777, p. 21.

but with no purpose. Thereupon he approached the Nizam and Nawab Anwar-ud-din, but they had their own problems to deal with. In 1746 he appealed to the French for aid, promising to cede Devakottai as reward. To Dupleix, the Governor of Pondicherry, Devakottai was too small a bait to tempt him.[5] Eventually his entreaties to the English turned fruitful, for Charles Floyer, the Governor of Fort St. David, influenced by the accounts of the interested persons, Sayaji's assurances that a strong party still remained loyal to him and above all offers of concessions including the cession of Devakottai decided to lend his support.[6] This alliance of the English with Sayaji led to the British intervention in Thanjavur and conflict with Pratap Singh.

Civil war in Arcot

At Arcot Chanda Sahib contested the nawabship for himself. The Nevayet chief had been detained as a prisoner at Satara for long because Safdar Ali sent contributions to the Marathas periodically for not releasing his rival. But after the death of Safdar Ali no nawab cared to keep the Marathas in good humour. As a result, Raghuji Bhonsle agreed to release Chanda Sahib and his son Abid Sahib from prison on payment of seven and a half lakhs of rupees. The Nevayet general at once sent a request to the French for advancing the amount on security of the jewellery, which he had deposited with his family at Pondicherry.[7] Dupleix at first hesitated but on second thoughts understood the advantages of upholding the cause of the Nevayets, for they still commanded considerable influence in the country and held several posts including Vellore. He opened communications with Satara, agreed to pay the amount and secured the release of the Nevayet chiefs early in 1748. By this time Nizam Asaf Jah passed away and Nasir Jung, the second son of the Nizam, ascended the throne. There appeared a rival in Muzaffar

5. *The Diary of Anandaranga Pillai*. Vol. I, pp. 355-358.
6. Defence of Lord Pigot, 1777, d. 23.
7. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, p. 256.

Jung, governor of Bijapur and son of the favourite daughter of Asaf Jah. He claimed the nizamate of Hyderabad for himself by virtue of the alleged dictates of his grandfather.[8]

These conflicts local and isolated to begin with, developed into major struggles, when different powers drew near. The interest which Dupleix took in the release of Chanda Sahib served as a nucleus for the formation of a powerful military bloc. Chanda Sahib took the next step, when he on his way from Satara to Arcot entering the service of Muzaffar Jung defeated the rebel ruler of Bednur. He lost his son Abid Sahib in this battle. Muzaffar Jung appointed Chanda Sahib as his Nawab of Arcot, Senji, Tiruchirapalli, Thanjavur and Madurai,[9] partly in assertion of his claim and partly in recognition of the services that he rendered. The French, the Nevayets and Muzaffar Jung formed themselves into a confederacy and prepared for the expulsion of the Wallajahs from Arcot.

In June 1749 Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jung at the command of 14,000 horse and 15,000 foot descended upon Arcot. A French army of 2300 men joined the confederates. On the approach of the enemy the Nawab accompanied by his sons Maphuz Khan and Mohammad Ali marched from Tiruchirapalli for the defence of Arcot. In the battle at Ambur fought on the 23rd July 1749 the confederates defeated and slew the Nawab.[10] Maphuz Khan fell a prisoner[11] but Mohammad Ali made his escape. Chanda Sahib took possession of Arcot while Mohammad Ali retained control of Tiruchirapalli.

Until Mohammad Ali's flight to Tiruchirapalli the English

8. Asaf Jah had six sons-Ghazee-ud-din, Nasir Jung, Salabat Jung, Nizam Ali, Basalat Jung and Moghal Ali Khan.
9. *The Diary of Anandaranga Pillai*, Vol. 4, p. 124.
10. *Ibid.*, Introduction.
11. Naphuz Khan secured his freedom by promising to pay a tribute of eleven lakhs of rupees for Tiruchirapalli to Muzaffar Jung, *The Diary*, V, Vol, pp. 155 & 292.

and the French in their relations with the South Indian powers appeared mutually exclusive. While the English decided to support Sayaji against Pratap Singh, the French agreed to assist Chanda Sahib against Anwar-ud-din and Muzaffar Jung against Nasir Jung. The rival European powers, while deciding to intervene in the civil wars, did not come into conflict with each other. The result was that the French and their allies won the first round of the struggle without facing the British opposition. But the ascedancy gained by the French excited the fears of the English and forced them to join the camp, which the former chose to oppose. The scope of British intervention appeared little but for Mohammad Ali's control of the strong fort of Tiruchirapalli. The French on their part did not reciprocate the British confrontation so far Thanjavur was concerned. On the other hand by their unwise invasion of Thanjavur in subsequent times they drove Rajah Pratap Singh, who at first fought on their side, into the British camp.

Though expediency decided the respective alignments of European powers, each of the rivals left no stone unturned in seeking to establish the legitimacy of its candidates. Yet seldom their assertions had any bearing on realities. In Thanjavur the English were justified in upholding the cause of an elder brother, but it cannot be denied that Pratap Singh ascended the throne at the will of the head inhabitants. In the Carnatic Chanda Sahib was the conqueror of Tiruchirapalli and the rightful representative of the Nevayets. Mohammad Ali on the other hand was an usurper, for he inherited power through the usurpation made by his father and through the usurpation he himself made from his elder brother, Maphuz Khan. Chanda Sahib claimed his authority as derived from Muzaffar Jung, while Mohammad Ali from Nasir Jung. Here the question seemed complicated, for the rights of the contestants for the throne of Hyderabad appeared nothing but illusory. While the claims of Nasir Jung came into conflict with the rights of his elder brother, Ghazee-ud-din, those of Muzaffar Jung with the rights of his uncles. Both of them, however,

attributed their claims to Asaf Jah but it was a travesty of fact that the Nizam himself was an usurper of Moghul rights.[12]

Civil War in Thanjavur

The decision of the English to support Sayaji against Pratap Singh marked the beginning of the civil war in Thanjavur. In April 1749 Governor Charles Floyer sent Captain Cope at the command of an expedition to the kingdom. The invaders expected popular support, but were disappointed. Besides, an unexpected hurricane intercepted the march of the forces and deprived them of the support of the fleet. The forces landed on the bank of the Kollidam but were forced to return to Porto Novo. On 21st April, after necessary preparations, they again marched against Thanjavur.[13] Captain Cope laid siege to Devakottai, but failed. The forces of Thanjavur under the command of Manakji launched a counter attack on the British columns, destroyed two of their field pieces and forced their retreat.[14]

In spite of this reverse, the Council of Fort St. David decided to continue the military operations. Though the declared object was to undo the harm done to the rights of Sayaji, the real one was the resentment at having been defeated by a local power. Manakji offered to make peace, but the English demanded the cession of Devakottai, payment of the expenses of the expedition and an annual allowance for

12. M. Wilks, *History of Mysore*, Part I, p. 161.
Besides claiming his authority as derived from the Nizam, Mohammad Ali asserted his right on the basis of a firman which he alleged to have received from the Mughal Emperor on the 24th March, 1751 - two years after the war started. (Madras Council, Military Consultations dated 29th April, 1754). Malleson is of the view that Charles Floyer shrank from "the support of a pretender in extremis" *(French in India*, p. 241)

13. Fort St. David Consultations 17th April, 1749 Vol. 17, p. 99.

14. *Ibid*, 26 April 1749, Vol. 17, p. 105.

15. *Ibid.*, 23 May 1749, Vol. 17, p. 143.

Sayaji.[15] As Pratap Singh declined, war contined.

With a determination to retrieve the tarnished glory, the English sent a powerful army, now under the command of Major Lawrence. In June 1749 Lawrence made an assault on Devakottai, but it was repulsed. A second assault turned out successful and the fort fell.[16] The invaders wanted to capture more posts held by Pratap Singh, but did not venture to do so for fear that further advance would be attended with difficulties. Peace was, therefore, settled. The Company withdrew its support to Sayaji but obtained possession of Devakottai.[17]

Search for Allies

In October 1749 Chanda Sahib marched from Ambur to Tiruchirapalli. Mohammad Ali had neither the time nor the resources to assemble any formidable force. The English did not yet evince any definite interest in his cause, for they were busy in garrisoning Fort St. George, restored by the French under the terms of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.[18] Yet Chanda Sahib failed to exploit the circumstances to his advantage. On the other hand he marched against Wodayarpalayam, Ariyalur and Thanjavur, seeking contributions.[19] From Thanjavur he sent an expedition to Madurai and occupied the southern areas. By now Nasir Jung descended upon Arcot in support of Mohammad Ali. Threatened with war, Chanda Sahib and his allied forces withdrew to Pondicherry.[20] Mohammad Ali joined the camp of Nasir Jung, while an Eng-

16. *Ibid.*, July, 1749, Vol. 17, p. 188
17. James Mill in his *The History of British India*, (Vol. III, pp. 60-65) states that the English abandoned the cause of Sayaji. But in Fort St. David Consultations dated 4th December, 1749 it is stated that the English granted a monthly allowance of Rs. 300 to Sayaji for fear that he would go over to the camp of Chanda Sahib.
18. Public Country Correspondence, Madras September 1749. Vol. 3, p. 34
19. Military Country Correspondence, Madras 1 January 1754. Vol. 2, p. 61.
20. Pubic Country Correspondence, Madras, Vol. 3, P. 34.

lish embassy headed by Major Lawrence waited on the Nizam seeking an alliance.[21] For fear of defeat Muzaffar Jung surrendered to the Nizam. It appeared that the cause of Chanda Sahib and the French was doomed.

At this critical hour, the sagacity of Dupleix did not fail him. He declared to the Nizam that he withdrew his forces for the purpose of creating a situation favaourable for the settlement of terms. The Nizam took it for granted and sent his messengers to Pondicherry to convey his anxiety for a settlement.[22] Dupleix reciprocated, he sent his deputies to Nasir Jung's camp and demanded the release of Muzaffar Jung and the confirmation of Chanda Sahib in the nawabship. The French availed of the opportunity to establish contact with the sardars in the camp for hatching a plot against the Nizam. Nasir Jung, however, rejected the terms of Dupleix and even appointed Mohammad Ali as his Nawab of the Carnatic.[23] Thereupon the French attacked the camp of the Nizam under the cover of darkness and killed about 1000 men. So alarmed was the Nizam that he dismissed the English embassy the the next day and returned to Arcot.[24] Intrigues and negotiations still continued and in the end the former triumphed over the latter. On the 5th December his own sardars assassinated Nasir Jung.

The sardars and the French now proclaimed Muzaffar Jung as the next Nizam. The new ruler promptly rewarded the services of his allies. He confirmed the appointment of Chanda Sahib as his Nawab and ceded villages near Karaikkal and Pondicherry to the French. It seemed that fortune smiled upon the French and their allies. Dupleix sent a force led by Bussy with Muzaffar Jung for the settlement of Hyderabad

21. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 11 Jauuary 1754, Vol. 2, p. 56.
22. *The Diary of Ananadaranga Pillai,* Vol. VII, pp. 32-33.
23. *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p: 67 and p. 157.
24. *Ibid.*, p 85.

and another led by La Tour with Chanda Sahib to Arcot.[25]

The chain reaction set in motion by the intrigues of Dupleix did not end abruptly. The sardars who killed Nasir Jung were so much disappointed in their expectations of getting liberal rewards, that they now plotted against Muzaffar Jung and killed him at Raichout, near Cuddappa, in January 1751. Yet the prompt step taken by Bussy, kept the trend of developments still in favour of the French and Chanda Sahib. He proclaimed Salabat Jung, the third son of Asaf Jah, as the next Nizam and established French influence at Hyderabad.

Seeing the march of events going against him, Mohammad Ali abandoned the camp of the Nizam and returned to Tiruchirapalli. Salabat Jung confirmed Chanda Sahib in the nawabship and directed Mohammad Ali to quit his stronghold. Still, the Wallajah chief made another desperate bid to build up his strength. He obtained the services of a body of the troops of Nasir Jung and consolidated his position at Tiruchirapalli. Now he sought the aid of the English. This was purely accidental, for he had no other choice except to appeal to the English, the principal rivals to the French, who supported the Nevayets. Saunders, Governor of Fort St. George, saw in this offer an opportunity for bolstering up the sinking prestige of the English. He promptly sent a force under Captain Cope to the fort of Tiruchirapalli.[26]

Contest for Tiruchirapalli

The momentous struggle for the control of Tiruchirapalli began in March 1751. Though it seemed that South India lay at the mercy of the Nevayets and the French, Tiruchirapalli presented the challenge to their supremacy. At the commencement of the contest, Chanda Sahib appeared far more formidable than his opponent. He had a superior force, the active

25. H. D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, London, 1913, Vol. II, pp. 431-432.

26. M. Wilks, *History of Mysore*, part I, p. 170.

support of the French, the co-operation of the Nizam and the control of Arcot as well as of Madurai. Mohammad Ali on the other hand had a small army and the support of the English and the local powers. Still his greatest asset was the possession of an invulnerable fort, which in fact neutralised the military superiority of his enemies.[27]

Chanda Sahib and the French began the siege of the fort in March 1751. Simultaneously both the sides forwarded their own terms for a settlement. Chanda Sahib offered to grant a territory anywhere in the Carnatic if Mohammad Ali evacuated the fort.[28] But the Wallajah chief on the advice of Saunders evaded a direct reply, yet professed friendship.[29]

As no settlement could be effected, the siege continued. Chanda Sahib made repeated attempts to storm the fort, yet could not launch any decisive action mostly because of the unenterprising attitude of the French. Greatly disappointed, Chanda Sahib attempted to forge an alliance with Thanjavur but failed. Thereupon he invaded the kingdom and occupied the districts of Tiruvarur, Mannargudy and Kumbakonam.[30] Subsequently, he turned to Mysore for aid. It was the traditional policy of the rulers of Mysore to interfere in the internal wars of the Tamil Country for the purpose of acquiring territories. In consonance with this policy, the ruler of Mysore agreed to furnish an army of 2000 horse and 5000 foot for the capture of Tiruchirapalli. Chanda Sahib on his part agreed

27. *Diary of Anandaranga Pillai*, Vol. 8, Introduction, pp. 7-8.

28 Mohammad Ali, Letter to Saunders, received on 16th January 1751, Public Country Correspondence, Vol. 4, p. 4.

29. Saunders told Mohammad Ali that while the latter was at Tiruchirapalli and was assisted by the English, nobody could hurt him. But once he parted with it he had nothing to trust but the enemy's pleasure. (Saunders, 18th January 1751, Letter to Mohammad Ali and Mohammad Ali, 26 January 1751, Letter to Saunders, Public Country Correspondence Vol. 4, pp. 5-49.)

30. Manoji, Letter to Madras Council, received on 3rd August 1751, Public Country Correspondence, p. 49.

to assign a territory yielding an annual revenue of three lakhs of rupees to Mysore. Despite the settlement of terms, the alliance did not materialise. Perhaps, because of his fear that an alliance with Mysore would neutralise the French influence Dupleix disapproved the settlement. He refused his consent to an alliance which did not bring in money.[31] This angered the Rajah of Mysore and drove him into an alliance with Mohammad Ali.

Alliance with Mysore

Mohammad Ali took quick advantage of the situation created by Dupleix's repudiation of the alliance with Mysore. Though he lacked the enterprise of Chanda Sahib, in intrigue undoubtedly overshadowed his rival. He sent his emissary to Srirangapatam with attractive proposals. The price which he offered for military aid was the cession of Madurai Country with all its dependencies. Neither in extent nor in resources, this territory appeared inferior to Mysore. The Rajah of Mysore readily accepted the offer and agreed to render active assistance to Mohammad Ali for the reconquest of Arcot from the Nevayets. To provide against any failure of the contemplated scheme Mohammed Ali obtained the consent of the Rajah for the cession of Ardenhully in Mysore to the Wallajahs. This alliance brought with it the services of Murari Rao, the experienced Maratha general, with his disciplined cavalry. Murari Rao was at this time in the service of Mysore, but when he decided to serve the Wallajahs, he too had an ambition to re-assert his authority over Tiruchirapalli, which he surrendered to the Nizam.[32] Despite the heavy price offered to Mysore, the terms of the settlement seemed advantageous to Mohammad Ali. If he won the war he stood to gain control of Arcot and if he failed, still stood the chance to receive a district.

As the prospect of obtaining military assistance from

31. *The Diary of Anandaranga Pillai* Vol. VIII, pp. 67-69.
32. M. Wilks, *History of Mysore*, Part I, pp. 170-173.

Mysore appeared bright, Mohammad Ali promptly made the following suggestion to Saunders. "If a disturbance could be raised in the Arcot country towards Madras it would in all likelihood confound the enemy and break their hearts. I hope, therefore, that you'll enter into the Resolution". He also promised to furnish military aid to the venture, as he felt confident of doing it on the arrival of the forces from Mysore.[33] The suggestion appeared feasible as well as valuable, because Arcot was left almost undefended.

Expedition to Arcot

Saunders, accordingly, sent a force of 500 men under the command of Robert Clive from Fort St. David to Arcot in August 1751. The scheme was kept a guarded secret, for its success entirely depended upon it. In consequence the news did not reach Dupleix until after a week. Without encountering any serious opposition. Clive occupied the fort of Arcot on the 1st of September. It was indeed a remarkable event that a small band of bold veterans took the capital of the Nevayets. But the French and their allies differed in their assesment of the significance of the incident. Dupleix regarded the loss of Arcot as a serious one, but Chanda Sahib considered it as an insignificant raid which would end soon after the fall of Tiruchirapalli.[34] As a capital city, the loss of Arcot was really a severe blow to Chanda Sahib, but as it had no great strategic importance, its fall had little impact on the siege of Tiruchirapalli. A body of 2 000 horse under the command of Reza Sahib, son of Chanda Sahib, marched from Tiruchirapalli to recapture Arcot, but failed. Yet the situation appeared critical for the British as the surrender of Clive seemed imminent. Mohammad Ali sent no army to the rescue of Clive and the disappointed Saunders felt that the Wallajah chief deceived him.[35]

33. Public Country Correspondences, Vol. IV, p. 47, Mohammad Ali Letter to Saunders, received on 29th July 1751.
34. *The Diary of Anandaranga Pillai*, Vol. VIII, Introduction p. ix.
35. Public Country Correspondence, Madras, Vol, IV, p. 70.

In September 1751 the much expected reinforcements from Mysore reached Tiruchirapalli. Nanja Rajah and Veeranna, two generals, noted more for their arrogance than for their enterprise, commanded the Mysore forces, which consisted of 5,000 horse, and 10,000 foot. Of the rank and file of the Mysoreans, a small body of troops drilled by the French and led by Haider Ali formed the only regular corps. Together with them there reached 6 000 trained cavalry men, commanded by Murari Rao.[36] Besides furnishing these troops, Nanja Rajah advanced 80,000 rupees for the immediate relief of Mohammad Ali.[37] The advent of the Mysoreans turned the scales against the Nevayets and the French. As fortune comes, it comes in procession; likewise, more powers now rushed to the aid of the Wallajahs. The Rajah of Thanjavur sent 3,000 horse and 2,000 foot, while Tondaiman of Pudukkottai 400 horse and 3,000 troops for the aid of Mohammad Ali. Against these large arrivals into the camp of the Wallajahs Chanda Sahib received 4,000 irregular troops sent by Setupati Katta Tevar of Ramanathapuram. The balance of power stood in favour of the Wallajahs.

In October Nanja Rajah sent 5000 horse under the command of Boojinga Rao, brother of Murari Rao, to Arcot. The expedition did not reach Arcot until Reza Sahib effected two breaches on the fort. It was the 53rd day of the siege. On the appearance of the forces of Mysore Clive and his men emerged out of the fort and in co-operation with the Marathas defeated Reza Sahib in a series of battles, at Arcot, Arni and Kaveripak. After these victories the Maratha and British troops made a triumphant march to Tiruchirapalli and joined Mohammad Ali.[38] In the succeeding months more forces including 1500 English troops under the command of Major Lawrence joined the Wallajah stronghold. This marked the collapse of the

36. M. Wilks, *History of Mysore*, Part I, p. 173.
37. Public Country Correspondence, Madras, Vol IV p 57.
38. R. M. Martin, *The Indian Empire*, Vol. I, pp. 259-271 and H. D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, Vol. II, pp. 431-432

blockade instituted by Chanda Sahib on the fort a year before. To make the confusion confounded the French troops, ignoring the vehement protests of Chanda Sahib abandoned their advance posts, crossed the Kaveri and took defensive positions at Srirangam.

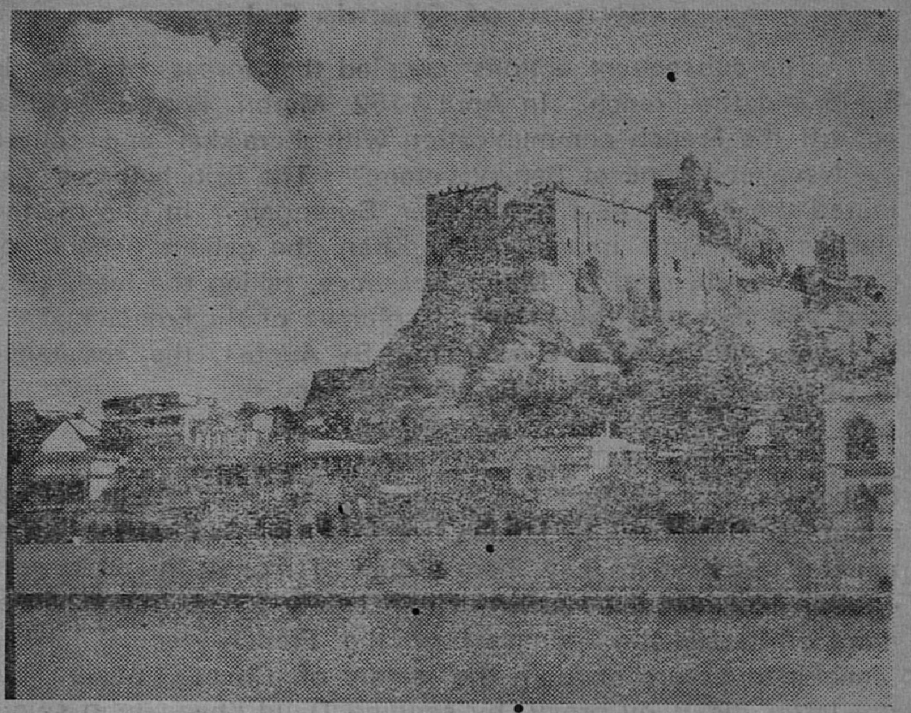
Execution of Chanda Sahib

The subsequent actions crippled the forces of Chanda Sahib and the French. In April 1752 Murari Rao and Clive cut off the French communication with Karaikkal and routed the Nevayet troops at Samayaveram.[39] The British forces defeated the French in a battle near Srirangam. In one of the clashes near Tiruchirapalli, Alam Khan, the gallant general of Chanda Sahib, died.[40] Major Lawrence, taking the lead, attacked and defeated the principal columns of the French and the Nevayets, stationed at Srirangam. By August, the resistance of Chanda Sahib and the French collapsed.[41]

The camp of Chanda Sahib was so completely surrounded by hordes, that he found it impossible to escape. In a last minute settlement with Manakji and Murari Rao, the Nevayet general promised to pay them a sum of money for their conducting him disguised as a fakir in safety to the French settlement of Karaikkal. Jacques Law the French general, asked Manakji to assure on oath the safety of Chanda Sahib, but the latter did it by proxy, by sending Daud Khan, who swore on the Qoran to that effect. The French general asked for a hostage to remain with the French until Chanda Sahib, reached Karaikkal, but Manakji refused. Still as there was no other alternative, Chanda Sahib surrendered.[42] The same day Manakji held a secret conference with Major Lawrence and decided the fate of their victim. On the 17th June 1752 he

39. J. Mill, *History of British India*, Vol. III, p. 86.
40. S. C. Hill, *Yusuf Khan*, p. 30.
41. M. Wilks, *History of Mysore*, p. 30.
42. *The Diary of Anandaranga Pillai*, Vol. VIII, pp. 111-112.

treacherously executed the Nevayet chief.[43] This shattered the hopes of the Nevayets. Mohammad Ali made a triumphant march to Arcot.



A view of the Rock Fort at Tiruchirapalli

43. M. Wilks, *History of Mysore*, part I, p. 177.

The Muslim writers notice in the exeuction of Chanda Sahib, a visible manifestation of God's vengeance, for he was put to death in the Dalawai Mantap, the spot where sixteen years ago he falsely swore on the Qoran not to injure Queen Minakshi (Kirmani's History of Hydur Naik - Translation by Mills, p. 36.)

Chapter X

DEBACLE OF MYSORE

Immediately after gaining the victory over the Nevayet and French forces, Nanja Rajah demanded the cession of Tiruchirapalli as per the terms of the settlement. Otherwise called Madurai during this period, this territory extended from the Kaveri to Kanyakumari. As Mysore already held possession of Kongu Nadu, which included Coimbatore and Salem, annexation of Tiruchirapalli would have greatly added to her prestige. But Mohammad Ali on his part asked for two months time on the plea that he wanted to settle the country and shift his establishments from Tiruchirapalli to Arcot. In an attempt to convince Nanja Rajah of his 'sincerety', he ceded Srirangam to Mysore and admitted a body of 700 Mysoreans led by Gopal Razu into the fort of Tiruchirapalli. Thereupon the Nawab accompanied by the forces under Major Lawrence, proceeded to Arcot. He was entitled to ask the chief of Mysore to furnish military aid for the settlement of the Arcot Country, but he carefully avoided it perhaps because his conscience revolted against the duplicity which he decided to play.[1]

The Nawab had no intention whatsoever to keep his word. Without any pretence of concealment, he declared to Lawrence that he had executed the agreement without any desire of implementing it. When he left Tiruchirapalli, he even stationed a strong army in the fort in order to guard against any surprise attack. The postponement of the fulfilment of the promise without any tangible reason and the precautions taken for the defence of the fort naturally shattered the radiant hopes which Nanja Rajah cherished so far. Therefore, the Mysore chief decided to take advantage of the absence of the Nawab at Tiruchirapalli and the presence of a

1. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, Vol. 1, p. 98.

body of Mysore troops inside the fort for taking possession of the fort.

As a first step Nanja Rajah bribed a corps of the Nawab's troops to help him in this adventure. But to his disappointment this particular corps was soon sent away to Arcot. As a next step he employed assassins for the murder of Kier-ud-deen Khan, who was in charge of the fort and Captain Dalton, who was in command of the British troops. The assassins were seized at the gate but their lives were spared at the intervention of Murari Rao. Subsequently, the Mysore chief sent his agents to contact the sardars of the fort; but they were apprehended and executed. When these attempts failed he made a bid to bribe the guards of the fort, to arm the French prisoners housed inside and to capture the citadel, but this plot too was discovered. Kier-ud-deen Khan in an attempt to remove a potential source of danger expelled the Mysore troops from the fort and arrested Gopal Rauz.[2]

In October 1752 the Mysoreans moved away to Srirangam beyond the reach of the batteries of the ramparts. On the expiry of the two months, time for which the Nawab asked, Nanja Rajah made a formal repetition of his demand for the cession of the country. But Kier-ud-deen Khan retorted that the Mysoreans forfeited all their rights by their machinations to take the fort by force. Now Mohammad Ali offered to mortgage Tiruchirapalli except the fort for the sum, which Nanja Rajah spent for the war, but the Mysore chief demanded either the cession of the entire country including the fort or the payment of all his expenses. He further remarked that the country without the fort was like a body without head.[3] Considering the importance of the fort and terms of the agree-

2. Madras Council, Military Consultations, Madras, 20 July 1752, Vol. I, p. 53.
3. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 23 January 1753, Vol. I, p. 11.

ment, Nanja Rajah was justified in making the demand but the Nawab had no other terms to offer. To the demand of the Mysore chief Mohammad Ali gave a strange reply that the country belonged to the Moghuls, because of which he had no right to alienate any part thereof.[4] If the Nawab had fancided that the Moghuls had any right over the territory, what was required of him was to hand over the interests which he already held. Subsequently Nanja Rajah requested the Madras Council to pay him one crore of rupees or to cede Tiruchirapalli.[5] But Governor Saunders declared that both Mohammad Ali and Nanja Rajah were culpable; the former for offering to give away what was not his own and the latter for agreeing to accept what was not the Nawab's.[6] As this argument lacked substance, Nanja Rajah rightly remarked that if Mohammad Ali had given consideration to the Moghul rights, he should have restored the country to Chanda Sahib in accordance with the orders of Nizam Salabat Jung, the Moghul representative. Besides, he questioned the propriety of waging a war against the Moghul deputy, Chanda Sahib, and held the English guilty of supporting a rebel.[7] These charges and counter charges naturally led to no settlement.

Battle of Thiruchirapalli

It is evident that Nanja Rajah because of his ambition to acquire a large territory accepted too big an offer made by a chief, who was guided more by expediency than by any principle. Though his cause appeared just, as it is in ordinary politics, he could find no allies except Murari Rao to support

4. Ibid., 15 August 1753, Vol. I, p. 214.
5. Madras Country Military Consultations, 15 January 1753, Vol. II, p 34.
6. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 3 May 1753, Vol. 1, p. 94.
7. It should be noted that Mohammed Ali granted the places of San Thome, Trevendapuram and Poonamalle to the English without the approval of the Moghul Emperor in return for military aid in the war. (Public Country Correspondence, 7 January 1751, Vol. IV, p. 2.

his claims. Even the alliance of Murari Rao depended upon Nanja Rajah's ability to pay him. The English, Pratap Singh of Thanjavur and the Tondaiman of Pudukkottai supported the Nawab. Dupleix on his part decided to utilise the opportunity to fight another war against the English. He suggested to Nanja Rajah to finance the French participation in the war on the side of Mysore, but the former appeared reluctant. Negotiations continued yet with no positive result. Dupleix therefore threatened to send the Nizam's forces, commanded by Bussy, against Mysore and secured the needed consent. The French now proclaimed Reza Sahib, the son of Chanda Sahib, as the nawab of Arcot and detached a French army under M. Astruc to join the forces of Mysore.[8] Establishing their stronghold in the island of Srirangam, the forces of Mysore, supported by the French and the Marathas of Murari Rao, commenced offensive operations in October 1752.[9]

They captured the advanced posts held by the Nawab's forces and established a close blockade of the fort of Tiruchirapalli. But in a series of actions fought in July 1753, Mohammad Ali scattered the hostile concentrations. In consequence the French withdrew to Srirangam and the Mysoreans to Manaparai.[10] In August a large rabble of all descriptions, arrived from Mysore for the aid of Nanja Rajah, but could gain no advantage.

Because of rains, forces of Mysore and the French for the

8. M. Wilks, *History of Mysore*, Part I, p. 184.
On the execution of Chanda Sahib, Dupleix proclaimed himself as the Nawab of the Carnatic and then declared Reza Sahib as Nawab. But when he found it difficult to finance the war he proposed to make Murtaza Ali, the ruler of Vellore as the nawab, of the Carnatic. Murtaza visited Pondicherry in March 1753 and gave one lakh of pagodas and then got away quietly without being troubled to become the nawab.

9. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 30 December 1752, of 1, p. 263.

10. *The Diary of Anandaranga Pillai*, Vol. 8, pp. 368-377.

next few days remained quiet in their camps. They allowed the garrison to enjoy an undisturbed possession of the fort and uninterrupted flow of provisions. The garrison was thus lulled into false sense of security. On the 29th November the danger that was lurking revealed itself. Between 3 and 4 A. M. 600 Mysorean and French troops escaladed the wall on the western side at a point, where it was eighteen feet high from the summit of a rock, that interposed the excavation of the ditch. These veterans after carrying the outworks by complete surprise, moved unnoticed to the inner wall, ready for assault, while others kept in reserve on the glacis prepared to make false attacks at several other points. However, by a mischance a scaling ladder broke down and a large number of the assailants got penned up in a narrow space between two walls. A guard soon discovered the hiding enemy and alerted the entire garrison. There started a fire of mosquetry which threw the adventurers into utter dismay. The intruders in their anxiety to escape rushed to climb down, but to their agony found no ladder or even a single rope for their rescue. In their hurry to surprise the garrison, they had carried away all the ladders after every stage of their progress; as a result of which they failed to take any precaution for an emergency. One hundred and four adventurers fell dead, an equal number leaped down in despair but few escaped without fractures while 397 surrendered. The garrison sallied out and killed 600 more of the waiting enemy. The attempt to surprise the fort thus ended in discomfiture, but it was by chance that the fort could be saved.[11]

Embarrassed by repeated reverses and critical finances, the allies of Nanja Rajah withdrew from the contest. In May 1754 Murari Rao deserted his camp.[12] Disillusioned by the

11. *The Diary of Anandaranga Pillai*, Madras, 1924, Vol. 9, Introduction and M. Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, Part I, pp. 185-197.

12. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 11 October, 1754, Vol. 2, p. 339.

political machinations of Dupleix, the French Government sent Godeheu to take his place at Pondicherry. In October Godeheu made a settlement with the English leading to a suspension of hostilities.[13] Left without any ally, Nanja Rajah found his position unenviable. Now he himself opened a separate communication with the Madras Council. His object was to persuade the English to withdraw from their alliance with the Nawab and to secure their support to his cause. Accordingly he offered to the Madras Council that he would pay the whole expenditure incurred by the English during the military operations at Tiruchirapalli on condition of the cession of the country to Mysore[14]. This amount, which otherwise was to be paid by the Nawab, came to thirty five lakhs of rupees.[15] The Madras Council showed an inclination to accept the proposal partly because of its financial embarrassment and partly because of the threatened expedition of the Nizam to Tiruchirapalli.[16] However, as the issue involved vital interests of the English as well as of the Nawab, Lord Pigot, the Governor of Madras, referred it for the decision of the Secret Committee of the Board of Directors.[17]

Humiliation of Mysore

Though the Madras Council feared that Salabat Jung would invade the Carnatic, what happened was that he, assisted by Bussy, attacked the ill-defended country of Mysore. The threat to Mysore demanded the return of its forces from Tiruchirapalli and indirectly helped Nanja Rajah to extricate himself from a hopeless war. On 8th April 1755 Nanja Rajah with his forces returned to Mysore,[18] after abandoning his long

13. C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties etc.*, Vol. 5, Calcutta, 1864, No. 36.
14. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 25 October 1756, Vol. 5, pp. 344-346.
15. Ibid., 25 March 1754, Vol. 3, p. 78.
16. Ibid., 21 March 1754, Vol. 3, p. 71.
17. Ibid., 25 October, 1757, Vol. 5, p. 345.
18. *The Diary of Anandaranga Pillai*, Vol. 9, p. 263.

cherished mission. He ceded Srirangam to the French,[19] though the latter withdrew from the alliance. Nanja Rajah was of no service to Mysore either. Before he could reach for its defence, Salabat Jung defeated the Rajah and collected fifty two lakhs of rupees.[20]

By the end of 1756 the orders of the Secret Committee of the Board of Directors directing the Madras Council to accept the proposal of Nanja Rajah reached Fort St. George. But the conditions in Mysore had changed radically. The war at Tiruchirapalli, the Maratha inroads and the Nizam's invasion had ruined the country. The financial embarrassment together with disorders in Mysore made it extremely doubtful whether a settlement on the basis of the proposals, already made, could be effected. Still Governor Pigot sent his messengers to inform Nanja Rajah of the Company's approval of the proposal. The Mysore chief, evading a direct reply, made a long re-capitulation of his sacrifices and requested again the cession of Tiruchirapalli or the payment of his expenses. Yet personal correspondence through Robert Orme continued. Lord Pigot made no public offer to Nanja Rajah for fear of alarming Mohammad Ali without being sure of the outcome.[21] Tiruchirapalli remained in the undisturbed possession of Mohammad Ali.

The significance of the alliance and subsequent conflict of Mysore with the Carnatic was of great magnitude in the history of India. Their immediate result was that they exalted the prestige of the Wallajahs. Mohammad Ali emerged triumphant and in the secure possession of Tiruchirapalli. Before long

19. Ibid., p. 293.
20. M. Wilks puts the amount at Rs. 56 lakhs (*Historical Sketches of the South of India*, Vol. I, p. 214) But the official records give the figure as 52 lakhs (Military Consultations, 15 June, 1755, Vol. 4, p. 92.)
21. Madras Council Military Consultations, 25 October, 1757, Vol. 5, pp. 344-346.

he obtained Moghul recognition to his title as Nawab of the Carnatic.[22] Yet it cannot be denied that his triumph was the product of the flagrant violation of his obligations to Mysore.

The rulers of Mysore for long cherished an ambition to acquire possession of Tiruchirapalli. Nanja Rajah by his intervention in the conflict at Thiruchirapalli followed the traditional policy of Mysore, but the results proved disastrous. The long conflict and failure to obtain any compensation sapped the vitality of Mysore and seriously undermined the prestige of the Rajah. The kingdom fell a prey to the Nizam's and the Peshwa's invasions. The confusion, that resulted, helped the rise of adventurers. Haider Ali, who served with Nanja Rajah at Thiruchirapalli and distinguished himself in the wars against the Marathas, captured power in 1761.[23] By undermining the influence of Nanja Rajah, Mohammad Ali contributed to the ascendancy of a potential enemy in Haider Ali. He sowed a wind, but reaped a whirl wind. The ultimate results of the conflicts with Mysore reacted disastrously upon the Wallajahs of Arcot. They left a trail of bitterness in the relation of the Carnatic with Mysore In later years Haider Ali, determined to wreak vengence upon Mohammad Ali for his betrayal of Mysore, ravaged the Carnatic.[24] The Mysore Wars of the subsequent period not only weakened the Wallajahs but also made them more dependent upon the English. Ultimately the English swept the Wallajahs out of power.

Foundation of British Empire

The Battle of Tiruchirapalli, that was fought during the Second Carnatic War, lasted for more than four years from March 1751 to April 1755. It was waged in two stages. In

22. Ibid., 6 January, 1755, Vol. 4, p. 5.

23. In 1761 when Haider Ali laid siege to Srirangapatnam Nanja Rajah appealed to the Madras Council for aid but the English took no notice of the request on account of the Seven Year' War (Military Country Correspondence, 22 July, 1761, Vol 9, p. 161.)

24. S. C. Hill, *Yusuf Khan*, p. 75.

the first round a coalition of the French, the Nevayets and the Nizam encountered a combination of the English, the Wallajahs and Mysore. At the end Chanda Sahib was executed and his allies were defeated. The Wallajahs gained possession of the Carnatic and the English established their influence in South India. In the second round there came a diplomatic revolution, for an alliance system forged by Mysore, the French, and Murari Rao came into conflict with that of the English, the Wallajahs and the Marathas of Thanjavur. At the end Dupleix was recalled from India and his allies were defeated. As the result of these two rounds of struggle, the English established their supremacy over their rival powers, European as well as Indian, in the South. Two years later in 1757 they sent an expedition from Madras and extended their influence to Bengal.

What is conspicuous in India of the eighteenth century was the emergence of the South as the centre of political gravity. The principal powers of the times, except the Moghuls, had their capitals in the South-the Marathas at Poona, the Nizam at Hyderabad and Mysore at Srirangapatnam. So also did the European powers-the Portuguese at Goa, the Dutch at Nagapatnam, the French at Pondicherry and the English at Madras. The martial spirit of the Tamils supplied the forces to the English and the French.

The great powers of the times fought two major wars for the control of South India. The Moghuls waged a bitter struggle against the Marathas but they lost it. This enabled the Marathas to move to the North but were locked up in a struggle with the Afghans. Taking advantage of this situation, the English and the French sought to wrest control of the South and entered into a major conflict. A decisive victory in the South appeared essential to enable them to move into the North. This was what Tiruchirapalli accomplished for the English. In this battle the British defeated the French, humbled Mysore, neutralized the Nizam and secured control of the Catnatic and Thanjavur. With the supremacy in the South, so firmly gained, it appeared no difficult a task for the British to extend their

imperial sway. In the context of power politics of the period the triumph at Plassey was therefore no more than an off shoot of the victory at Tiruchirapalli. In fact it was not Plassey but Tiruchirapalli that laid the foundation of British Empire in India.

Chapter XI

REBELLION OF KHAN SAHIB

In 1755 during the war against Mysore Mohammad Ali decided to assert the Wallajah authority over Madurai. He sent a large army under the command of Colonel Heron and Maphuz Khan on a southern expedition. In February the forces attacked the forts of the poligars of Manaparai and subdued them.[1] Marching through Kallar Nadu, they occupied Madurai held by the Patan chief, Miana[2] and took the field against the poligars of Tirunelveli. Heron and Maphuz Khan defeated most of the poligars but suffered reverses in their conflicts with Kattabomman of Panjalamkurichi and Puli Tevar of Nelcatanseval.[3] Yet the Wallajahs succeeded in bringing a large part of the region under their control. Mohammad Ali appointed his brother Maphuz Khan as his renter of Madurai and Tirunelveli. As Maphuz Khan found it impossible to suppress the poligars, the Nawab and the Company sent Khan Sahib, an able general, to Madurai and established their power over the rebels. In May 1759 the Madras Council with the approval of the Nawab appointed Khan Sahib as the Governor of Madurai.

Administration of Khan Sahib

After assuming the administration, Khan Sahib addressed himself to the task of re-establishing order in the country. In October 1760 he expelled the forces of Haidar Ali from the border areas, as they committed depredations.[4] Early in 1761 he defeated Puli Tevar and occupied his strongholds. Now

1. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 13 February, 1755 Vol. 4, pp. 24-44.
2. Military Country Correspondence, Madras 21 August, 1756, Vol. 4 pp. 128-129.
3. Madras Council, Public Despatches to England, Vol. 19, pp. 85-87.
4. Madras Council Military Consultations, 8 October, 1760, Vol. 13, p 973

the rest of the poligars submitted and accepted the circar authority.[5] The victory over the poligars left Khan Sahib free to eorganise the war shattered economy as well as the administration. Indeed, the re-construction was overdue as the country had been hit by disorders, since the first quarter of the century. Khan Sahib sought to rectify the maladies by extending relief to the peasantry and imparting vigour to the administration.[6]

Accordingly, he gave peace to the country and undertook the rehabilitation of villages, deserted during disorders. He advanced money for cultivation, repaired the water courses and rebuilt the gutters, with stone. By clearing the woods, he brought more lands under plough. Naturally these welfare activities helped the peasants to improve their economy. Commerce and manufacture also received his attention. As the Pandyas and the Cholas did, he constructed rest houses for the merchants, gave security of travel, protected the merchants against exaction, helped the weavers with loans and trained the people in the manufacture of gun-powder and other war materials. Also he conciliated the Hindus by giving grants to the temples and reviving the performance of ceremonies in the places of worship. His favourite maxim was that the labourer and the manufacturer should be the favourite children of the state, as they afforded strength and comfort to the society. He held the view that the Kallars, though were entitled to justice, had no pretension to indulgence so long as they led the lives of prodigals wasting their own resources as well as ravaging the country. This self formulated principle guided his policy. The deficit revenue of the provinces was made a surplus, without the administration was made guilty of oppression.[7] In fact the administration of Khan Sahib

5. Robert Orme, *History of Indostan*, Vol. 2, p. 707.
6. Yusuf Khan, Letter to Madras Council, received on 15 June, 1760, Military Country Correspondence, Vol. 5, pp. 194-195.
7. Madras Council, Military Despatches to Court of Directors, 20 July 1759, Vol. 2, pp. 70-71.

was marked by efficiently as well as vigour. His justice was unquestioned and the guilty was denied of chance to escape from punishment. While his word was unalterable, his measures were properly combined and firmly executed. The popularity of his measures was proved by the fact that the inhabitants during the later periods demanded the restoration of his system.

Rebellion of Khan Sahib

After a short interval of peace, the country again fell victim to invasions. The rulers of Travancore, Sivagiri[7], Wadagara and Panjalamkurichi formed a confederacy against Madurai. In 1762 the Travancore forces invaded Tirunelveli both from Tovala and Shenkottai, while the poligars raised disturbances. Thereupon Khan Sahib, supported by the Maravas, attacked the invading forces in Wadagara. After a short battle, the forces of Travancore retreated. After this victory he moved towards Aramboly and fought ten bloody encounters with Dharma Rajah of Travancore. The invaders evacuated their posts and retreated in humiliation. Khan Sahib pursued the retreating army upto Neyyattinkara, where the Raja made entreaties for peace.[8] By a treaty signed on 21st February, 1763 both the chiefs agreed on peace and to render mutual assistance against any external aggression upon their respective territories.[9]

Immediately after the Travancore War, Khan Sahib returned to Madurai and proceeded to strengthen the defences. His war with Travancore, fought without the approval of the Nawab or the Madras Council, excited suspicions. There followed a class of interests and preparation for rebellion. Under the prevailing circumstances a public servant of great ability found it possible to build up his strength and to defy the central authority. Khan Sahib was no exception. Subject to the payment of the rent, he was left absolutely free, for neither

8. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, October, 1764, Vol. 12, pp. 356,-367.

9. Ibid., 26 February, 1767, Vol. 3, pp. 216-239.

did the Nawab nor did the Madras Council seek to restrict his influence. An organising genius and a man of proved ability, he utilised the opportunity that favoured him to build up his military power. But this did not essentially indicate that he contemplated upon rebellion, because army was essential even for the enforcement of circar authority. Though Khan Sahib was a fellow Muslim, Mohammad Ali always entertained a dislike for him. This was indicated not only by the Nawab's opposition to stationing him at Madurai as commander of the forces of the English Company, but also by subsequent machinations. In his letters to Lord Pigot he charged Khan Sahib that the latter constructed forts at Natham[10] and that he sought the aid of the Maravas, Thanjavur, the Danes, the Dutch and the French in preparation for rebellion.[11] However, these charges lacked substance, for he constructed mud-forts at Natham in order to keep the Kallars in awe and to protect the country against any possible incursions from Mysore.[12] It was a prevailing practice to seek the aid of the other powers either in troops or in war materials. Even Alexander Heron, the British Commander, utilised the services of the rulers of Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga for the military operations against the rebels of Madurai in 1755. Khan Sahib obtained supplies of gun powder and other stores from the Danish and Dutch merchants. He entertained the French deserters in his service, but that was with the consent of the Madras Council.[13]

A state of strained relations developed, when Lord Pigot, the Governor of Madras decided to abandon Khan Sahib to the Nawab's control. Khan Sahib looked upon the Madras Council as his superior and paid the rent to it accordingly.

10 Mohammad Ali, 4 February, 1763, Letter to Madras Council, Military Country Correspondence, Vol. II, pp. 41-42.

11. Mohammad Ali, 12 February, 1763, Letter to Madras Council, Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 59-63.

12. Kumara Lingam of Natham, Letter to Madras Council, received on 26 December, 1760, Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 382.

13. S. C. Hill, *Yusuf Khan*, p. 106.

But in January 1762 Lord Pigot directed him to remit the rent to the Nawab.[14] This suggestion meant the subjection of a servant of the Company to the authority of a ruler who had no sympathy for him and the withdrawal of the Madras Council's confidence from its general. High spirited and proud, Khan Sahib kept his own counsel and decided never to subject himself to the Nawab. S.C. Hill, who wrote a historical sketch on Khan Sahib, considers this as the cause of the rebellion,[15] but this was really a prelude.

Subsequent developments aggravated the situation. As Khan Sahib did not remit the rent to the Nawab's treasury Lord Pigot recalled him to Madras.[16] But as the troops of Travancore raided Tirunelveli, Khan Sahib replied that he would comply with the order after driving out the invaders. Felt aggrieved, he expressed his resentment at the indifferent attitude of the Madras Council and characterised its order as the outcome of the malicious advice given by the Nawab.[17] But Lord Pigot without due appreciation of the great risk which his general took in his wars against a formidable foe, condemned Khan Sahib's policy towards Travancore[18] and ordered military operations against Madurai. Khan Sahib, on the other hand, made a settlement with Travancore and prepared for resistance.[19]

Threatened with invasion, Khan Sahib repaired the fort of Madurai, made fresh recruits and posted the Kallars to guard the northern frontier. In an attempt to win the support

14. Lord Pigot in Council, 29 January, 1762, Military Consultations, Vol. 61, p. 27.
15. S. C. Hill, *Yusuf Khan*, pp. 110-111
16. Lord Pigot, 7 September, 1762, Letter to Yusuf Khan, Military Country Correspondence, Vol. 10, p. 291.
17. Yusuf Khan, 11 November, 1762, Letter to Madras Council, Ibid., Vol. 10, p. 298.
18. Lord Pigot, 24 November, 1762, Letter to Yusuf Khan, *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, pp. 300-308.
19. Lord Pigot, 7 September, 1762, Letter to Yusuf Khan, *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 291.

of the people, he declared that the Hindus were the real owners of the country and announced his intention to restore the country to the Nayaks of Madurai and himself to serve as minister.[20] To strengthen his position further, he persuaded the rulers of Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga to furnish 4,000 of their troops for his aid.[21] Also he entered into correspondence with Haidar Ali, the Nizam and the French for enlisting their support. Haidar Ali agreed to send 4,000 sepoys and 2,000 horse to serve at Madurai.[22] The two chiefs decided to make simultaneous attacks on Arcot and Tiruchirapalli, respectively.[23] However, Khan Sahib's effort to win the support of the Nizam did not succeed, as the latter insisted upon a payment of thirty lakhs of rupees as condition thereto.[24] Yet he settled an alliance with the French and hoisted their flag on the ramparts of Madurai in March 1763.[25] In consequence of these combinations a local rebellion assumed complex proportions.

Nevertheless the success of the rebellion depended upon the precarious support of the allies. The French offered their assistance but in August, 1763 when the news of the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris, terminating the Seven Years' War, reached Pondicherry, they withdrew their support. The affairs of Mysore in the mean time were so confused that Haidar Ali found it impossible to send any considerable army to join Khan Sahib. As the rulers of Marava states refused to surrender the rebels who fled to their woods, Khan Sahib unwisely raided Sivaganga in July 1763. The result was that he alien-

20. Mohammad Ali, 7 April, 1763. Letter to Madras Council, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 154.
21. Mohammad Ali, 1 March, 1763, Letter to Madras Council, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 90.
22. A cadjan from Alagappa Mudali to his Vakeel at Arcot, no date, Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 119.
23. Mohammad Ali, 7 April, 1763, Letter to Madras Council, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 154.
24. Mohammad Ali, 11 March, 1764, Letter to Madras Council, *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 57.
25. Mohammad Ali, 17 March, 1763, Letter to Madras Council, *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 109.

ated the sympathy of the Maravas.[26] Ultimately he had to rely upon his own resources - his forces consisting of 2,000 cavalry, 600 European mercenaries, 10,000 sepoys and numerous Kallars.[27]

There were two roads leading from Tiruchirapalli to Madurai. The direct road passed through a narrow pass at Natham, between huge rocks hemmed in by jungles of excessive thickness. As it was a place of strategic importance, Khan Sahib strengthened its defences by constructing forts, well manned by the Kallars. An expeditionary force could take the circuitous eastern route which passed through Pudukkottai and Sivaganga. Therefore General Lawrence, who assumed the general command of the operations, persuaded the local chiefs to permit the forces to march through their territories.[28]

In August 1763 an advance column led by Colonel Monson entered Madurai from the north-east. A detachment of the Nawab's troops advanced upto Natham and cut off the communications of the rebels with Mysore. The forces occupied the forts of Triumbore and Thiruvadur, thus clearing the way for an assault on the fort of Madurai.[29] On the 2nd September 1763 the forces charged the cavalry of the rebels on the outskirts of the city; but were defeated in a counter attack. Heavy rainfall impeded the operation. Yet the British and Nawab's forces began a siege, but their endeavour to make a practicable breach failed.

Major Preston who took over the command, captured the barriers held by the Kallars and drove out a body of

26. Colonel Monson, 24 August, 1763, Letter to Lawrence, Military Consultations, Vol. 19, p. 484.
27. Mohammad Ali, 21 August, 1763, Letter to Madras Council, Military Country Correspondence, Vol. 11, p. 277.
28. Major Lawrence, 12 and 13 July, Letter to Lord Pigot, Military Consultations, Vol. 18, pp. 370-372.
29. Colonel Monson, 16 September, 1763, Letter to Lawrence, *Ibid.*, Vol 19, p. 551.

troops sent by Haidar Ali for the aid of the rebels.[30] In April 1764 the forces occupied Srivilliputtur and forced the poligars to abandon the cause of Khan Sahib. An English detachment landed at Tondi and began a drive from the east and gained control of the eastern areas. In June 1764 the Nawab with a body of troops and a detachment from Bombay arrived at Madurai.[31] Abandoned by the poligars and deprived of the territories, the rebels found their position extremely precarious.

In June 1764 Major Donald Campbell, who assumed command of the forces, ordered the renewal of the siege of Madurai. Despite heavy rains the storming party scaled the walls at several points. The rebels, on the other hand, keeping themselves hidden within the enclaves of the walls, kept the pikes driving against the assailants or hurled a shower of stones, hand grenades and shells on the advancing columns. The siege continued untill the English lost 160 of their troops killed. Failing to reach the summit, they made a humiliating retreat.[32] After the failure of the assault, the forces of the Nawab and the Company blockaded the fort. Hard pressed for provisions, the rebels made overtures to the Nawab. M. Marchand, a French officer in the service of Khan Sahib, offered to evacuate Madurai in return for permission to go off in security to Dindigul.[33] But Mohammad Ali, well acquainted with the enterprising genius of Khan Sahib, demanded unconditional surrender.[34]

Marchand, failing to persuade Khan Sahib to surrender, entered into a plot with the sardars of the fort, leading to

30. Robert Palk in Council, *Ibid*, 6 February, 1764, Vol. p. 67.
31. Undut ul Umara, 2 June, 1764, Letter to Madras Council, Military Country Correspondence, Vol. 12, pp. 226-227.
32. Campbell, 26 June, 1764, Letter to Madras Council, Military Consultations, Vol. 20, p. 364.
33. Yusuf Khan, 17 September 1764, Letter to Madras Council, *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 296.
34. Madras Council,, 20 October, 1761, Military Despatches to England, Vol. 3, pp. 153-156.

the arrest of the chief. The rebels thereupon surrendered the fort in return for the general pardon granted.[35] On the 14th of October Mohammad Ali entered the fort and hoisted his colours. On the 16th the Nawab executed Khan Sahib.[36] A body of the rebels who formed the hard core, fled towards Karur, but were attacked and subdued. The surrender of Palayamkottai completed the victory of the Nawab over the rebels.[37]

As Haidar Ali consolidated his strength in Dindigul before he captured power in Mysore, Khan Sahib, aimed at the establishment of his authority in Madurai. With a long tradition of independent existence and separated from the rest of the country by the jungles of Natham and the mountains of the west, Madurai offered the needed advantages. But when Haidar Ali won, Khan Sahib failed. This was more because of British alliance with the Nawab than because of any military weakness of the rebellion. The collapse of the rebellion contributed to the consolidation of Nawab's authority. The English on the otherhand utilised the opportunity to extend their influence through military aid.

35. Robert Palk in Council, 27 October 1764, Military Consultations, Vol. 27, p. 735.
36. Mohammad Ali, 16 October, 1764, Letter to Madras Council, *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 353.
37. Robert Palk in Council, 12 November, 1764, *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 794.

WALLAJAH EXPANSION

Nawab Mohamad Ali entertained an ambition to extend his authority far and wide. He wanted to occupy the territories, annexed by Mysore from Madurai, to subdue the poligars, to gain possession of Thanjavur and to extend his authority to Ceylon. After his victory at Tiruchirapalli, he made a determined attempt to translate his designs into practice. Accordingly in 1756 he sent an expedition to Vellore and forced Murtaza Ali to acknowledge Wallajah sovereignty. In the next year he subdued Vandavasi, held by Tuckia Sahib, brother-in-law of the Nevayet ruler, Safdar Ali. In 1765 with the aid of the Company, he annexed the palayams of Ariyalur and Wodayarpalayam in Tiruchirapalli. Further he made a settlement with Travancore by which he sold Shenkottai and Kanyakumari to that Kingdom and consented to receive in return an annual tribute of 4000 *chakrams* and an elephant every year. He sought the aid of the Company to occupy Karur and Dindigul from Mysore but for fear of outbreak of war, the Madras Council did not comply. As the king of Kandy in Ceylon was chief from Tirunelveli, the Nawab claimed him as his vassal and sought British assistance to collect tribute but nothing materialised.

Expedition to Thanjavur

Thanjavur had rendered meritorious service, both military and economic, to Mohammad Ali in his wars against Chanda Sahib, Nanja Rajah and the French. As a result the Nawab not only consolidated his power in Tiruchirapalli but reconquered Arcot. But when the purpose was served, he turned against his ally. In 1762 at the instance of the Company, Pratap Singh, the Rajah of Thanjavur, settled a treaty with the Nawab. He accepted the over-lordship of Arcot and agreed to pay four lakhs of rupees as the annual tribute. The English assuming the role of an arbiter, guaranteed the enforcement

of the settlement so that the Nawab would not encroach upon the rights of the state and that the Rajah would not refuse the payment of tribute. In 1763 on the death of Pratap Singh his son Tulaji ascended the throne. Enterprising and warlike, he cherished an ambition as it was natural for a subordinate

Mohammad Ali (*from a painting*)

prince, to assert his independence and extend the limits of his Kingdom. Mohammad Ali on the other hand sought the annexation of this fertile territory on some pretext or other.

Determined to precipitate a crisis, the Nawab in September, 1769 requested the English for aid to compel the Rajah to pay twenty five lakhs of rupees as compensation for his 'failure' to render active service against Haidar Ali during the First Mysore War (1765-1768). He brought forward certain charges too: that the Rajah assisted the rebel Khan Sahib and that he encourged the poligars to join Haidar Ali. In justification Mohammad Ali asserted that exactions were quite in consonance with the custom of the land. But the Treaty of 1762 which governed the relations between Arcot and Thanjavur did not make it obligatory on the Rajah to render any military aid. On this ground the Madras Council refused any support to Mohammad Ali for the coercion of the Rajah. Yet the English permitted the Nawab to make the demand on the state without giving the impression of violating the treaty, as they felt that it was reasonable to ask the Rajah to contribute for the expenses incurred in the war against Mysore.[1] Tulaji on the other hand requested the Nawab to grant him a remission of the tribute, as Haidar Ali had destroyed many of his villages.[2]

While the contemplated expedition was hanging like the sword of Democles on Thanjavur, Tulaji declared war on the Marava states. He decided to occupy Hanumantgudi, a disputed territory held by the Maravas. At the command of 4,000 horse and 50,000 foot, the Rajah in September 1771 invaded Ramanathapuram and captured the posts of Mangalagudi, Hanumantgudi and Armogam. Threatened with the fall of the capital, the queen regent of the state purchased peace by ceding Hanumantgudi and paying Rs. 1,30,000. The

1. Military Country Correspondence Madras, 23 June 1756, Vol. 4, p. 174 and *Ibid*, 19 April 1768, Vol. 18, pp. 133-135.
2. Madras Council, Military Consultations, Madras, 12 October, 1769, Vol. 35, p. 52.

victorious army now marched against Sivaganga. Facing no serious opposition, the invaders advanced on Nelakkottai, the capital. Tulaji directed Rajah Udaya Tevar to cede a part of his territory, to pay a handsome present and to part with six of his elephants. No terms being settled, he decided to storm the fort, but was caught in the rear by the Nawab's expedition to Thanjavur.[3] Mohammad Ali denounced Tulaji's expedition as a hostile action against his circar. He claimed it as his right to maintain order in the relations between dependent states and asserted that Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga and Pudukkottai were dependent upon his government. Taking this opportunity, he requested military aid of the Company for punishing the king of Thanjavur.[4]

The Nawab's demand for military support placed the Madras Council in a quandary. The Treaty of 1762 for which the Company stood guarantee did not envisage the possibility of a conflict over the Marava territories and hence did not make provisions for dealing with such an exigency. Besides, both the Nawab and the Rajah claimed the Maravas as their dependents. Therefore Governor Josias Du Pre (1770-1773) appointed a commission consisting of himself, Warren Hastings and Samuel Ardley to enquire into the political status of the Marava states. In its report the commission rightly observed that neither did the Maravas nor did Pudukkottai pay any regular tribute to any power any time, though the rulers of Madurai exacted contributions from them under threat of violence. It rightly concluded that the Maravas and Pudukkottai maintained their independence against Arcot as well as Thanjavur. Upon this consideration the Madras council refused aid to the Nawab.[5]

3. Radhakrishna Aiyar, *A General History of the Pudukkottai State*, p. 251.
4. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 24 March, 1771, Vol. 19, pp. 119-123.
5. Radhakrishna Aiyar, *A General History of the Pudukkottai State*, p. 245.

Failing to exploit the situation, Mohammad Ali tried other means to win the support of the Company. He held the Rajah guilty of violating the Treaty of 1762 by neglecting payment of tribute for the year 1769 and of instigating the Marathas, the Nizam and the French to ravage the Carnatic. These arguments too had no substance. Haider Ali's expeditions inflicted such a serious damage to the economy of the state that the Rajah found it difficult to pay the tribute. Still, it cannot be denied that Tulaji committed a serious error of judgment in withholding the payment of tribute, when he decided te commit aggression on the Maravas and when the Nawab waited for an opportunity. It is not certain whether the Rajah instigated the powers to invade the Carnatic, but it was true that due to his apprehension that the Nawab decided to conquer his territory, he sought Maratha aid. In fact he wanted to involve the Carnatic in troubles because his security depended upon the Nawab,s preoccupation with problems.[6] The Nawab nevertheless presented his arguments properly sugar-coated to the Madras Council. In return for assistance to conquer the state he agreed to meet the military expenses of the English and offered to make a present of thirty five lakhs of rupees to the Company.[7] Now the objections, which held the Madras Council under restraint, vanished in thin air. Governor Josias Du Pre remarked that though he would not make a claim or a condition to any present, if the Nawab would offer it out of his good will, he would willingly receive it and advise the Court of Directors there of.[8] When Mohammad Ali overcame the objection of the English, he faced the opposition of the Marathas. Trimbuc Row, the Maratha general, who received an advance payment of five lakhs of rupees from the Rajah, threatened to descend upon Arcot in the wake of the Nawab's invasion of

6. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 13 and 28 March 1771, Vol. 41, pp. 80-82.
7. Military Country Correspondence, Madras 18 September, 1771, Vol. 19, pp. 218-222.
8. Ibid, 15 September, 1771, Vol. 19, pp. 113-115.

Thanjavur. However the circumstances turned favourable, when the Nawab made a present of four lakhs of rupees and dissuaded him from going to the aid of the state. As Mark Wilks remarks, Trimbuc Row like a true Maratha sold himself to both the sides.[9]

In September 1771 the combined forces of the Nawab and the Company marched on Thanjavur. Colonel Joseph Smith commanded the expedition, while the Nawab's son, Umdut-ul-Umara, exercised civil control. Vallam was the first target of attack. A regular and strong fort, it was situated six miles to the southwest of Thanjavur. After effecting a breach, the forces fired a few shots, but found the fort deserted.[10] On 25th Colonel Smith commenced a regular siege of the capital. The troops of the Rajah assembled in great number under the cover of a high ground and attacked the Company's troops, but suffered reverses in their attempts to cut off the enemy's communications with Tiruchirapalli. The forces silenced the guns on the ramparts and launched a night attack, but found the fort stroogly defended. Subsequently a negotiation began, leading to the settlement of peace. The war thus ended abruptly, without achieving the object of the expedition, namely annexation.[11]

Settlement with Thanjavur

There followed three settlements in October 1771. By the first settlement Tulaji agreed to pay eight lakhs of rupees as tribute in arrears. He restored the districts and effects taken from the Marava states and abandoned all his rights, which he claimed to have on Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga and Pudukkottai. The Rajah ceded the districts of Tervanur and Arni to the Nawab. He consented to render military

9. Mark Wills, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, Part I, p. 423.
10. Madras Council, Military Consultation, 23, September, 1771, Vol. 40, p. 830.
11. Madras Council, *Ibid*., 4 November, 1771. Vol. 40, p. 928.

service to the Nawab at his own expense whenever required, to remain in amity with the allies of Arcot and in enmity with the enemies, to refuse protection to the rebels of the Carnatic or to the Europeans who deserted army of the Nawab and to safeguard the commercial interests of the English in his territory. The Nawab on his part permitted the Rajah to retain possession of Koilody and Elangad and agreed to restore Vallam to the state. By the second settlement the Rajah assigned the district of Mayiladuthurai and part of the district of Kumbakonam yielding an annual revenue of more than sixteen lakhs of rupees for two years in lieu of the payment of thirty two and a half lakhs of rupees estimated as war indemnity. By the third settlement he promised to pay the annual tribute to the Nawab without deceit or delay and to undertake no military operations whatsoever.[12] Subsequently significant modifications to the territorial settlement were carried into effect. As the possession of the fort of Vallam was of utmost importance to the Nawab's interests, Mohammad Ali directed his son Umdut-ul-Umara, who settled the terms, to make the necessary modification. A fresh negotiation now ensued and Umdut-ul-Umara forced the helpless Rajah to cede not only Vallam but also Koilody and Elangad to the Nawab.[13]

The settlements conferred territorial and financial gains on the Nawab and commercial advantages on the Company-all at the expense of Thanjavur. The Nawab acquired possession of Koilody, Elangad, Arni and Tervanur. The possession of the 'anicat' at Koilody gave the Nawab control over the irrigation system of the kingdom. The Maravas were left under the undisputed overlordship of Arcot. The Rajah was required to pay the usual tribute but no reduction in proportion to the attenuation of his resources was conceded. The Company gained more commercial and military influence, but

12. C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, etc., Vol. 5, pp. 264-266.
13. Madras Council, Military Despatches to England, 4 April. 1772, Vol. 7, p. 75.

the settlement did not mention anything about its guarantee to the Treaty of 1762.

It was certain that Mohammad Ali desisted from the conquest of the state not for want of inclination to annex so important a territory. Considering that the siege advanced successfully, there was every reason to believe that the fort might fall.[14] But Umdut-ul-Umara declared that because of rains and loss of horses, the army doubted its ability to storm the fort.[15] Had this been true, it would seem hardly possible for him to dictate the humiliating terms to the Rajah. Mohammad Ali on the other hand, when enquired by the Madras Council, parried that he withdrew from hostilities for fear of Maratha invasion. By a secret agreement he even induced the Marathas to invade the Arcot territory. The Madras Council, anxious to repel the aggression, offered its aid to the Nawab, but the latter politely declined. This reflected the object of the mock invasion and the mysteries about the abrupt termination of the siege of Thanjavur.

In fact two factors persuaded the Nawab to enter into a settlement with the Rajah. He possibly wanted to make a merit with the Marathas of Poona by making a show that he desisted from the conquest of the state out of deference to to their sentiments.[16] This was necessitated as the Maratha general Trimbuc Rao conveyed his desire to the Nawab in favour of a peaceful settlement.[17] More than this, what oppressed his mind was his apprehension of a latent purpose in the Company's guarantee to the Treaty of 1762. Suspicious by nature, he was haunted by the fear that the sequel of conquest at that juncture would be the establishment of British

14. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 22 December, 1771, Vol. 20, pp. 1-3.
15. *Ibid.*, 8 November, 1771, Vol. 21, pp. 8-12.
16. Mark Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, part I, p. 423.
17. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 4 December, 1771, Vol. 19, p. 273.

sway over Thanjavur.[18] This apprehension was not without foundation. When the Nawab requested assistance for an expedition, the Madras Council conveyed its view to the Court of Directors that "it would be more advisable for the Company to retain it in their own possession or reserving the sovereignty, place in the management of it either the present Rajah or any other, subject to such limitations and conditions as might make him useful, but put it out of his power to be dangerous (to the interests of the English)."[19] It cannot be ruled out that Mohammad Ali who constantly kept an eye on the proceedings of the Madras Council would have learned about the machinations of the English. By his quarrel and subsequent accommodation, the Nawab fancied that he removed the restraint, imposed by the Company's guarantee, and could thereafter exercise authority in any way that might best suit his whims without any hazard of the Council's interposition.[20]

Annexation of Marava States

After his expedition to Thanjavur, the Nawab decided to annex the Marava States. Situated in the eastern region of Madurai Country, these states maintained a status of independence during the Nayak rule. The Marathas of Thanjavur invaded the states but had to withdraw because of Wallajah expedition. In 1771 Mohammad Ali represented to the Madras Council that the Marava rulers occupied circar villages, harboured the most notorious robbers in their woods and neglected the payment of tribute.[21] The Company agreed with the views of the Nawab, for it too declared them as dangerous delinquents. Accordingly it decided to extend military support for the destruction of the two kingdoms.[22]

18. Original Papers Relating to Tanjore, 1771, p. 40.
19. Madras Council, Military Despatches to England, 31 January, 1770. Vol. 7, p. 8.
20. *Ibid.*, 28 February 1772, Vol 7. pp. 125-127.
21. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 3 November, 1771, Vol. 19. pp. 101-102.

In January, 1772 the forces of the Wallajahs and the English marched on Sivaganga. They occupied Tondi but suspended the operations for fear of Maratha invasion. In May the campaign being resumed, the forces invaded Ramanathapuram. While one expedition under Joseph Smith besieged the Marava capital, another under Bonjour occupied Tiruppuvanam.[23] This prevented the forces of the two states from effecting a junction, On the 2nd of June the troops stormed Ramanathapuram and a large part of the 3000 strong Marava garrison died fighting. The invaders plundered the town and imprisoned the twelve year old Setupati, Muthuramalingam, and the queen regent.[24]

A two pronged offensive brought about the extinction of Sivaganga too. In June 1772 Smith invaded the principality from the east, while Bonjour from the west. Raja Udaya Tevar entrenched himself in the woods of Kalayarkoil. In the battle that followed the English defeated the troops of Sivaganga and occupied the strongholds. The Rajah died fighting but his widow fled to Virupakshi in Dindigul.[25] As a result of these compaigns, the Wallajahs established their authority over the Marava states.

Annexation of Thanjavur

After this victory the Nawab decided to annex Thanjavur. In 1773 he presented several charges against the Rajah. He asserted: Tulaji refused aid to him in his war against the Maravas in violation of the Treaty of 1762, assisted the Setupati and Rajah Udaya Tevar in their resistance to his army, mortgaged villages to the Dutch and the Danes with out his consent, and induced Haidar Ali and the Marathas to invade Arcot. The Nawab warned the Madras Council that

22. Madras Council, Military Despatches to England, 28 February 1772. Vol. 7-9, pp. 125-127.
23. Madras Council, Military Consultations, June 1772, Vol. 42, p. 442.
24. Madras Council, Military Despatces to England, 20 June 1772. Vol. 7-9, pp. 80-81.
25. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 13 July 1772, Vol. 42 p. 607.

unless he obliterated Thanjavur Raj, the Marathas and the French would convert it into a sphere of their influence and endangar their common security. In return for military assistance, he reiterated his former unfulfilled offer that he would make a present of thirty five lakhs of rupees and promised to support three battalions of the Company's troops at his own expense.[26] In reply Alexander Wynch, (1773-1775) the successor of Du Pre in the presidency, stated approvingly that it was always a matter of satisfaction to support the Nawab consistent with the Company's policy. Regarding the present, Wynch like his predecessor remarked "whatever your Highness shall please out of your good-will and friendship to offer me as a present to the Company, I shall most willingly receive and advice them thereof."[27]

The charges against Tulaji appeared as explanations aimed at the justification of the conquest of the state, which the Nawab contemplated. It was true that Tulaji, exasperated with Mohammad Ali's determination to suppress Thanjavur Raj, sought the support of Haidar Ali[28] and the Marathas but in 1773 when Wynch agreed to send an expedition, he ruled out the possibility of any foreign invasion of the Carnatic.[29] In fact Thanjavur in 1773 did not present any serious threat to the Nawab's interest as to warrant military action. The Rajah mortgaged villages to the Danes to raise moneyfor the payment of tribute for the year 1772; but it was not a violation of the Treaty of 1771, as he was not so restricted. When the Madras Council decided on the annihilation of the Raj, Tulaji appealed to Wynch: "some offence should surely be proved upon me, without any show of equity to wage an unjust war against me is not consistent with reason. This charitable country is the support of multitudes of people, if you Sir, will preserve it from destruction

26. *Ibid.*, 5 June, 1773, Vol. 42 p. 672.
27. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 7 July, 1773, Vol. 22, p. 127-128.
28. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 13 August, 1773, Vol. 46, p. 802.
29. Ibid., 5 July, 1773, Vol. 46, p. 672.

you will be the most great, glorious and honoured of mankind. I am full of confidence that you will never do injustice yourself nor listen to the face of the oppressor."[30] But the appeal of the ruler fell on deaf ears. In fact the helplessness of the Rajah, the avarice of the Nawab and collusion of the Company sealed the fate of the kingdom.

In August 1773 the forces of the Nawab and the Company led by Joseph Smith invaded Thanjavur. They captured the posts of Tourgudi and Singarapettai and on the 21st took position before the capital. An advance column commanded by Major Fletcher surprised a detachment of Thanjavur In the engagement the defenders lost 1000 men killed or wounded, while Fletcher lost only fifteen.[31] The siege continued for three weeks and on the 16th September the breach made on the walls appeared practicable. At noon the forces took position, ready for assault. The sun being very hot, the Rajah's army consisting of 20,000 men retired to their quarters for meals anticipating the attack only in the evening. But they regretted for their error in judgment, for Smith quickly surprised and carried the fort, with no loss whatsoever.[32] Tulaji, his relatives and ministers were taken as prisoners. The grateful Nawab rewarded the Company by making a present of thirty five lakhs of rupees and entertaining three battalions of its troops at his expense.[33]

After the annexation the Nawab strove hard to reorganise the administration of Thanjavur. He appointed Dubeer, an able minister of Tulaji, and brought servants from Arcot to carry out reforms. Land was surveyed and village settlement was introduced.[34] The new administration repaired water courses,

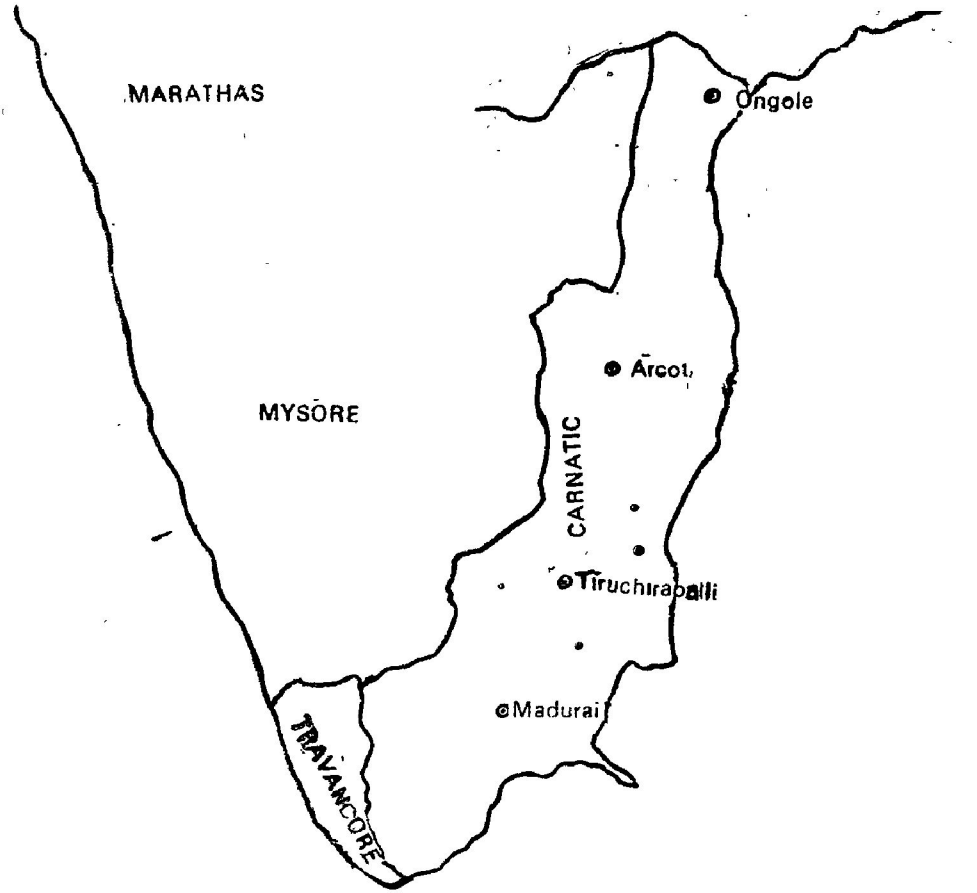
30. *Ibid.*, 13 August, 1773, Vol. 46. p. 802.
31. *Ibid.*, 15 August, 1773, Vol, 46, p. 835.
32. *Ibid.*, 19 September, 1776, Vol. 46, p. 883.
33. Military Country Correspondence, 13 January, 1776, Vol. 15. pp. 15.
34. Report of the Tanjore Commissioners, 1799, paras 10-36.

advanced loans for cultivation, distributed paddy seeds in *gratis*, discharged public debts, cleared the arrears of pay due to the forces of Thanjavur and proceeded with extensive repairs of the fort.[35] However, the benefits conferred upon the country were more than nagatived by oppressive exactions. The Nawab's servants, in the exuberance of victory, considered the revenues of Thanjavur not to be improved, but extorted. In three years of management they collected as much as 120 lakhs of rupees from the state.[36] In 1775, the year of his sole administration, the revenue exacted by the Nawab and the assignees amounted to no less than eighty one lakhs of rupees-a sum not reached until seventy five years of order and peace under British rule. The largest revenue ever raised by the Maratha rulers was fifty seven and a half lakhs of rupees in 1761.[37] In addition to exactions the Nawab granted *tuncaws* or orders for the payment of money which in Dubeer's estimate amounted to more than ninety lakhs of rupees.[38] The Maravas too experienced exaction. The Nawab renamed Ramanathapuram as Alinagar[39] and Sivaganga as Hussain Nagar.[40] Naturally the inhabitants resented the Wallajah policy.

After the annexation of territories, Mohammed Ali made a determined attempt to assert his authority and to free himself from the Company's influence. He built up a war machine consisting of 12,000 troops, seven regiments of cavalry and an artillery. Forts were repaired and garrisoned by his own troops.[41] He appointed his son, Amir-ul-Umara

35. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 23 January, 1776, Vol. 25, pp. 2-9.
36. Ibid., 13 May, 1776, Vol. 25, p 50.
37. T. Venkataswamy Row (ed.) *Tanjore District Manual, Madras, 1915*, Vol. 2 p, 810.
38. Lord Pigot's Narrative of the Late Revolution in the Government of Madras, p. 1.
39. Ramnad Book for 1782, Nos. 2-3.
40. Persian Records, Bundle 47, No. 65.
41. Mark Wilks. op. cit., p. 427.

The Carnatic in 1773



in command of his army and European officers to train the troops. After consolidating his influence, he aimed at placing the entire Carnatic under the control of Amir-ul-Umara and aspired to secure the nawabship of Bengal for his eldest son, Umdut-ul-Umara.[42] Further he cited the equality of his status with the king of England as recognised by the Treaty of Paris in 1763 and emphasised upon his sovereignty as acknowledged by the Moghuls.[43] In an attempt to convince the European powers of his independence and to counter British influence[44] he even established direct relations with the French, the Dutch and the Danes.

42. Madras Council, Public Despatches from England, Vol. 79, p. 68.
43. Mark Wilks, op, cit., p. 427.
44. Madras Council, Military Consultations, Madras, July, 1775, Vol. 52, p. 968.

Chapter XIII

ADMINISTRATION OF THE NAWABS

In Tamil Nadu of the eighteenth centuty what was characteristic of the political system was the absence of any uniformity or order. The principal ruler, the Nawab of Arcot, exercised sovereignty over most of the country. The Rajah of Mysore held possession of the western region. The subordinate rulers known as rajas or poligars exercised a large degree of independence in their respective territories. A territory, whether big or small ruled by a prince of significant on insignificant note was called *samstan*. Thus the Carnatic, Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga were referred to as *samstans*.

The Nawabs had his capital at Arcot. They belonged to two rival dynasties-the Nevayets who remained in power from 1710 to 1743 and the Wallajahs who ruled from 1743 to 1801. The conflict between the Nevayets and the Wallajahs contributed to the British ascendancy in South India. Pre-occupied with the wars of the period and perhaps indifferent to the welfare of the ruled, the Nawabs made no endeavour towards the improvement of the administrative set up.

Revenue Administration

The resources of public income were land revenue, tribute, duties, monopoly-rights, public enterprize, fisheries and fees. The land ravenue consisted of taxes collected on the crops, ready money-rent from the rented villages, fixed taxes on dry lands, special taxes paid for raising sugar cane, betel and plantain on wet-fields, payments made for the cultivation of waste lands not belonging to the villages, rates paid for letting the cattle into the forest lands and the fixed taxes on houses. Tribute consisted of the payments made by the subordinate chiefs. Duties otherwise called *sayar* were collected from again, salt and fish exported or imported and from

all the articles taken to the towns.[1] In Thanjavur the duties next to land revenue formed the most important source of public income. Levied at different rates, they varied according to the value of the commodities and the distance traversed.[2] The state derived income from the sale of arrack, the monopoly of the sale of bricks, tiles and other building materials, pearl fisheries, government owned salt pans, fines imposed by judicial officers, fees collected from money-lenders, compulsory donations obtained from the temples, the presents collected from parties celebrating marriages and deductions made from the inhabitants' share of the crops.[3] The taxes thus ran to a long list, some of the taxes adversely affecting economic progress. The taxation, applied on certain crops raised on wet fields, tended to check rotation of crops, the inland duties obstructed the growth of trade, monopoly of the sale of building material rendered the construction of houses highly costly and the unjust deductions destroyed the confidence of the people on the circar's justice.

The revenues of the districts in the Nawab's country were either farmed out or collected directly. In the first case the renter collected the taxes and remitted a fixed amount; while in the second, the *amuldar* received the taxes and paid them to the treasury. In Thanjavur the duties were rented out annually;[4] but the collection of land revenue was made in the following way. As soon as the paddy was planted, the circar obtained a report of its value according to the extent and appearance at the different stages of its growth. This estimate, if unbiased, proved wonderfully accurate and together with the needs of the government served as the basis for fixing the tax. When the harvest was gathered, the peasants were permitted to open the sale of grain and the public servants

1. Mohamad Ali, 14, April, 1770, Letter to Madras Council, Military Country Correspondence, Vol. 18, pp. 86-87.
2. T. Venkataswamy (ed), *Tanjore District Manual*, (Madras, 1915), Vol. 2, p. 685.
3. Persian Records, Bundle 6, Letter 42.
4. *Tanjore District Manual*, Vol. 2, p. 685.

were directed to keep a register of the prices. The *hircarrahs* or spies in the mean time observed the progress of sales in the weekly markets. After two months, when the grain was supposed to have found its full value, the Rajah convened a general meeting of the renters in his palace. The revenue officers in the mean time studied and compared the price index, the reports of the estimators and spies. After ascertaining the views of renters, they fixed the government's share for each subah. The meeting was called apparently to consider the claims for concession, but much depended upon the discretion of the palace officials.[5] Nevertheless the arrangement served a consultative purpose.

Different forms of tenure remained in force, of which some were joint and others individual. The joint tenures were the *veesabudi* and the *aumani*, while the individual ones were the rental and the poligari. In the case of joint tenure the peasants held the lands under common assessment. The *veesabudi* was a village assessment by which the peasants by arrangement among themselves paid the assessed tax for the whole area in ready money. The *aumani* too was a village settlement by which the cultivators shared the produce in such a proportion as to make good the total assessment for the village. These forms did not vary much in substance, for the villages were treated as units and the landholders were collectively held responsible for the payment of tax. The individual tenures were based upon the principle of individual responsibility for the payment of tax. The poligars or the renters collected taxes and paid a fixed amount to the treasury. While the poligar held the estate on a hereditary basis with a right to alienate any part of it, the renter held the land for a fixed term with no right to alienate any part thereof.[6] *Peshengary*, a joint tenure, implied a community of property in a village, where the landholders were held jointly responsible for payment of the public share of the produce. The second form called *adickraia*, an

5. Report of the Tanjore Commissioners, 1799, pp. 21-23.
6. Madras Council, 4 September, 1799, Revenue Consultations, Vol. 96, paras 1-76.

individual tenure, made every landholder separately accountable for the government's share of the produce. The third called *mirasi*, another individual tenure, did not vary from the second except in the size of the land held. By its tenure the *mirasdars* who possessed the right of cultivation in the entire villages were made to account individually to the circar for the payment of the and the joint, at times overlapped each other. For instance, when a district was farmed out, the renter was made individually responsible to the circar, while he was left free to make a joint assessment for a village. The individual tenure appeared suitable for a large farm and the joint tenure for the small holdings. Under the existing circumstances the joint tenure gave scope for bargaining and adjustment for the villagers.

The assessment on land varied from time to time. The law-givers of ancient India permitted the state to collect one-sixth and even one-fourth of the produce as its share. The Mohammadan law allowed the ruler to take one half of the produce as his share and from the infidels, more.[8] However, these concepts seldom found their beneficial place in the administration of the country. The general principle in the Carnatic was to share the produce in the ratio of fifty:fifty. In the Tamil territories of Mysore Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan took upto sixty per cent of the produce as the share of the state.[9]

7. Report of the Tanjore Commissioners, 1799, pp. 21-23.

8. The Hindu Sastras consigned a ruler guilty of exaction of more than one-fourth, to infamy in this world and to torments in hell. But the Mohammadan law grants a large degree of discretion. The *Hedia* states, "the learned in the law allege that the utmost extent of tribute is one half of the actual product, nor is it allowable to exact more; but the taking of a half is no more than strict justice and is not tyrannical, because, as it is lawful to take the life of the person and property of infidels and distribute them among the Mussalmans; it follows that taking their income is lawful a 'fortiori'. (Quoted by S. S. Raghava Iyangar, *Progress of the Madras Presidency during the last Forty Years* p. 1214.)

In Ramanathapuram it was only twenty per cent.[10] This was done after making a deduction of five per cent to provide for the expenses of harvesting. A local tax paid to the villages claimed about twenty eight per cent of the ryot's share of the produce.

Economic and political considerations caused fluctuations in these rates of division. Ekoji, the Maratha ruler of Thanjavur, allowed to the Brahmins thirty seven and a half per cent and to others only twenty. Pratap Singh in a bid to obtain popular support against his rival, Sayaji, raised the peasant's share to thirty seven and a half per cent and subsequently Amar Singh allowed forty and in some cases fifty. In the territories of the Nawab the additional levies had no bounds except the limitation placed by the supposed ability of the ryots to submit to them.[11] Indeed the share given to the peasants fell to one-sixth of the gross produce and seldom exceeded one fifth.[12] About 1785 the share allowed to the peasants was reduced to sixteen per cent of the produce. Out of this meagre share the ryots had to support their families and meet the expenses incidental to cultivation.[13] These instances reflect upon the magnitude of oppression.

A gradation of oppressive practices characterised by

9. Military Sundries, Madras, 13 August 1783, Vol. 66, p. 220.
10. Rajaram Row, *Ramnad Manual*, pp. 290.
11. S. S. Raghava Iyangar, *Progress of the Madras Presidency during the Last Forty Years*, pp 20-21.
12. The systems prevalent in our countries should be noted. The Hindu rulers levied 1/6 or 1/4 of the produce as tax. Emperor Akbar collected 1/4th of the produce as tax. In 1516, Sultan Salim fixed for his conquests in Egypt 1/2 and this rule was applied only to the luxuriant fields. Tamarlane settled 1/2 as tax or his Tartar, Persian and Syrian dominions. In Great Britain, France, Netherlands and Switzerland the claims of the state varied from 1/5th to 1/3rd. (*Fifth Report*, Vol. II, pp, 235-236). Compared to these standards, the taxes collected by the rulers of Tamil Nadu were oppressively high.
13. Military Sundries, Madras, 13 August 1784, Vol. 66, p. 220.

infinite claims and arbitrary impositions attented the enforcement of collections. At the beginning of the season, the the revenue servants estimated the sum to be collected. If the crop failed, they obliged the peasants to part with as much of the estimated amount as possible and if on the contrary unusual rains produced a plentiful crop they made the ryots pay more.[14] The renters even employed subtle tactics to mislead the peasants. They made fixed assessments to lure the ryots to extend cultivation. But if the rents were collected according to the fixed rates one year, the exactions were doubled in the next. Besides, if the crops appeared promising the additional levies were carried out under the pretence of clearing imaginary arrears and of paying presents. To facilitate exactions the revenue servants granted concessions to the influential people and increased the levies on the poor. Abuses attended the execution of the orders, which according to the nature of the administration frequently issued for the provision of bullocks, sheep and various articles needed for the army. The persons entrusted with these orders were guilty of the most unjust and partial exactions; some villages were obliged to contribute their whole stock, whilst others by means of bribe or favour were wholly excused.[15] Further, the revenue servants required the ryots to obtain a mandate for reaping the harvest. Should the peasants presume to violate this rule, nothing but the confiscation of entire crop would expiate the *offence*.[16] In addition the amuldars imposed restrictions on trade and obliged the inhabitants to pay almost all the taxes in kind for the support of an odious monopoly. So strict was the monopoly that the peasants were not permitted to bring any grain from the neighbouring places even for their domestic consumption. If any one lent a small quantity of grain for the immediate

14. Committee of Assigned Revenue, 11 November 1782, Proceedings, Vol. 2, p. 475.
15. Madras Council, 14 October, 1775, Revenue Despatches to England, Vol. I, pp. 1-26.
16. Military Sundries, Madras, 13 August, 1784, Vol. 66, pp. 223-224.

support of his neighbour, he on discovery was fined in the most exorbitant manner. The poorest classes were accustomed to earn a pittance by exchanging vegetables and herbs for grain, but that miserable traffic too was prohibited for fear that the state monopoly would not be complete otherwise. After making the system of oppression tight, they caused artificial famine and released the grain at high price to the same persons from whom they took it.[17] Thus the public servants ruined the country; they raised the revenue neither by increasing the purchasing capacity of the inhabitants nor by promoting cultivation nor by opening channels of trade but by a series of destructive devices that were detrimental to economic progress. To promote exaction the revenue servants applied force and violence day after day In every public office whips, scourges, thumb screws and other means of ordeals were regularly and ruthlessly applied on the unfortunate victims. In Thanjavur the sway of despotism was attended not infrequently with the forcible seizure of goods. If the inhabitants were so inattentive as to display their wealth the public servants would seldom rest until it was plundered.[18] In fact the ryot, the manufacturer, the artisan and other inhabitants lived at the mercy of these agents of exaction.[19]

The general imbecility and malignant corruption in administration threw the inhabitants into a sad plight The Nawab, anxious to secure a maximum revenue, appointed such managers as were found fit for this task. The renters on their part never failed to execute their commissions but with the utmost rigour.[20] The amuldar united in his person all the branches of revenue and judicial power. If he happen-

17. Selections from the Records of the Collectorate of Trichinopoly, 1867, pp. 6-7.
18. Military Sundries, Madras, 13 August, 1784, Vol. 66, p. 236.
19. *Ibid*, 83 August, 1784, Vol. 66, p. 218.
20. Selections from the Records of the Collectorate of Trichinopoly, 1867, p. 18.

ed to be a Brahmin he was also termed the representative of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. These extraordinary constituents in the complex endowments of the renter or amuldar, enabled him not only to exercise powers that ought to constitute the dignity and lustre of the supreme executive but to wield them arbitrarily. Besides, the revenue servants, convinced that the only tenure by which they held their positions was the frequent repetition of a bribe to their superior officers, harassed the inhabitants. They did this as much to satisfy their own rapacity as to feed the avarice of their superiors.[21] Added to these, the weakness of Nawab's administration furnished opportunities favourable for the imposters. Person claiming the Nawab's authority not only made demands upon the people, but issued warrants and imprisoned those who did not surrender to exactions.[22]

The oppressive policy of the rulers had its natural reaction. The resistance of the people was passive as well as violent. The passive resistance was reflected by their neglect of cultivation, fraud and embezzement, which characterised their attitude towards payment of taxes.[23] As a result the administration as in the past was marked by a conflict between the forces of exaction and those of evasion. At times the resistance of the inhabitants to the oppressive system assumed violent proportions. Such developments are indicated by their participation in the poligar outbreaks and the rebellions.

Public Expenditure

The rulers allotted funds for the maintenance of public as well as private establishments. The Rajah of Thanjavur spent most of his revenue for the support of pagodas, the Brahmin villages and choultries. In 1778 the concessions given

21. Military Sundries, Madras 13 August, 1784, Vol. 66, p. 110.
22. Madras Council, 22 April, 1800, Secret Consultations, Vol. 10, pp. 441-445.
23. Mohammad Ali, n. d., letter to Madras Council, Military Country Correspondence, Vol. 10, p. 252.

away to religious establishments in the estimate of Tulaji yielded an income of twelve lakhs of pagodas, while the total revenue of his circar amounted to only nine lakhs.[24] The Nawab on the other hand incurred a heavy expenditure on the extraordinary number of revenue peons, sepoys and horsemen, whom he employed for the enforcement of collections.[25] For instance in 1782 the Foujdar of Tiruchirapalli expressed his fear that the whole revenue of that province would not be sufficient for paying the circar peons.[26] The result was that the rulers found it impossible to give any attention to the important subjects like justice, education, public health and irrigation.

Despite the collection of taxes by force and violence, the circar, made no attempt to practise economy. There was no idea of budget. The amuldars and other revenue officials who collected the taxes met the items of expenditure on the spot and sent to the Nawab, if at all any balance remained.[27] This naturally gave scope for corruption. The ancient privileges of the chiefs and concessions granted to religious institutions were rated much higher than what they warranted. Besides titles of expenses were so joined as to afford pleas and means of secreting a great part of the revenue for purposes other than those that appeared fair.[28] These practices betrayed an utmost neglect of financial viability.

The diversion of public funds for the promotion of private interests of individuals saddled the state in financial embarrassment. The Nawab as well as the Rajah of Thanjavur raised loans, by which means they only intensified the general hard-

24. Rajah Tulaji, 28 October, 1778, letter to Court of Directors, *Ibid*, Vol. 27, p. 303.
25. Committee of Assigned Revenue, 27 May, 1782, Proceedings, Vol 2, p. 243.
26. *Ibid.*, 25 February, 1782, Vol. 2, p. 78
27. Persian Records, Bundle 9, No. 95.
28. Committee of Assigned Revenue, 27 May, 1782, Proceedings, Vol. 2, p. 243.

ship. The urgent claims of the influential creditors and officials introduced the destructive practice of granting *tuncaws* or assignments of revenue. The holder of a *tuncaw* assumed the authority of the government over the assigned territory and employed their armed men for the enforcement of collections.[29] In fact the administrators and creditors oppressed the people to the extent of their means.

Judicial Administration

Judicial administration received no serious attention of the rulers. The *quazi* who had his court in every chief town decided all cases in which the Mohammadans were parties. The chiefs and the *amuldars* administered justice in their respective territories for the Hindus. The raja of Thanjavur decided the cases with the help of *pandits* versed in legal lore. The poligars were the principal judges in their respective pollams. In Kallar Nadu the headman and the council of elders administered justice. In the provinces this was not really a part of the duty of the amuldar or renter, yet he assumed this function evidently because it served his purpose. The relatives and dependents of the amuldar in each district were so numerous that in most of the cases which came before him their interests were invplved. In the Nawab's territories the foujdar and his deputies dispensed with criminal justice. Combining in himself the powers of a magistrate and those of a sessions judge, he tried cases and passed sentences upon the accused. His decisions were subject to an appeal to and confirmation by the Nawab.[30]

Raja Pratap Singh established a court consisting of a single judge, who received regular salary. It decided the cases referred to it and permitted appeals to be taken to the king. However, as this arrangement led to the concentration of powers on a single judge, Rev. Swartz of the Danish

29. Military Sundries, Madras, 13 August, 1794, Vol. 66 pp. 114-116.
30. Board of Assigned Revenue, 10 November, 1782, Proceedings, Vol. 1, p. 485.

Lutheran Mission suggested the reorganisation of the court. Accordingly Amar Singh set up a new court of justice, consisting of a president and four judges. It sat daily and decided the cases according to the *Sastras*. The fees and fines collected by the court formed a fund for defraying the salaries of the judges. The court was open and its working appeared satisfactory. But subsequently corruption crept in. The judges were obliged to wait for permission to hear a law suit and when they began enquiry, they were frequently interrupted by messages from the palace officials.[31] Raja Sarafoji appointed *killedars* for the districts to settle the cases. An abstract of their proceedings was transmitted to the palace every month and the Raja reversed any decision of the *killedars*, that appeared to him as unjust.[32] However the Raja made no attempt to extend the jurisdiction of the court of justice at Thanjavur over the criminal cases.

The litigants enjoyed the right of employing interpreters called *dubashes* for the explanation of their cases to the judical authorities. Criminal offences were usually atoned for by fines, while disputes concerning properties were accommodated or settled by verdicts. Imprisonment was common and at times capital punishment was given to the criminals. The prisoners received no means of subsistence from the circar but were left entirely to the charity of their villages.[33] Yet they were frequently tortured.

The administration of justice was indeed marked by irregularity and abuse. The tendency was to overrate the pretensions of the superior castes, thus ignoring the principle of equality before the law.[34] The poor were refused protection against the despotic violence of influencial people. In the

31. Madras Council, February, 1790, Military Consultations, Vol. 133. p. 313.
32. Report of the Tanjore Commissioners, paras 48-52.
33. Military Sundry Book, Vol. 40, p. 93.
34. *The Diary of Anandaranga Pillai*, Vol. 12, p. 191, foot notes.

absence of any respect for human rights the administration of justice was tied to revenue. No judicial training was provided for judges were recruited from all shades of life with no training being given. Jagirdars, bankers and physicians occupied judicial offices, though the Hinduj urisprudence required that the judges should be *pandits* versed in law. The renters and amuldars with no knowledge of jurisprudence decided cases in a crude and summary way. In Thanjavur if the judges administered justice faithfully, the revenue officers made frequent complaints of having suffered a great loss of revenue. They asked for an abatement of rent on that account and the ministers in order to prevent such complaints being made influenced the judicial decisions.[35] In 1784 when a judge made his judgment strictly according to Islamic jurisprudence, he incurred the Nawab's displeasure and was removed from office.[36] These corrupt practices exposed the inhabitants to tyranny but being accustomed to a despotic rule for centuries, they entertained little hope of improving their lot.[37]

35. Madras Council, 9 November, 1790, Military Consultations, Vol, 140, p. 4138 and
William Hickey, *The Tanjore Mahratta Principality*, pp. 21-53.
36. Persian Records, Bundle 9, No. 67.
37. Madras Council, 14 October 1775, Revenue Despatches to England, Vol. 1, pp. 13-14.

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE NAWABS

The regional administration fuctioned at three levels - the provincial, the district and the village. Corresponding to the administration of the province in the Nawab's territory there was that of a princely state like Thanjavur or Ramanathapuram. Below the provincial set up there came the district unit, working parallel to that of a *palayam* like Sivagiri or Panjalankurichi. In each province there were two establishments - one revenue and the other military as in the Moghul Empire, but in the Nayak administation they were unified. The amuldar headed the revenue administration while the foujdar, the military establishment. However, no hard and fast rule was observed in the division of fuctions. It was not unusual to combine these two powers in the same person. For instance, Maphuz Khan, Khan Sahib and Amir-ul-Umara, the governors of Madurai under Nawab Mohammad Ali, exercised both the powers. The amuldar was a trustee, an arbiter between the circar collecting the revenue and the subjects paying it. His duties were not only the enfocement of collections and at times the control of the forces, but also the promotion of cultivation, the prevention of exaction and the administration of justice.[1] He had his *cutchery* or office at the provincial headquarters. In a princely state the rajah headed the administration. The king was assisted by a council of advisers or chiefs, usually consulted for formuation of policy.[2] Nevertheless the minister, known by different names as *sirkeel* in Thanjavur, *karyakarta* in Pudukkottai and *dewan* or *pradhani* in the Marava states served as the principal adviser to the ruler. The other officers included the commander of the army, the

1. Jadunatha Sarkar, *The Mughal Administration*, Calcutta, 1951. p. 58
2. Amir Singh, 17 July, 1792, Letter to Madras Council. Military Country Correspondence, Vol. 41, p. 55.

chief revenue administrator, the finance secretary, the chief accountant and the royal secretary. The rajah stationed his representative known as *vakeel* in the nawab's court The correspondence was carried on in Persian, the official language,[3] though Marathi and Tamil were also in use. The administration, whether of the provinces or of the princely states, was left without proper checks and balances.

Each province had sub-divisions called by different names-*taluq* in the Nawab's country and the Marava states, *subah* in Thanjavur, *valanadu* in Pudukkottai and *nadu* in Kallar Nadu. The chief administrator of the district was the *tahsildar* also known as *taluqdar, killedar* or *amil*, even called as *subedar*.[4] In a pollam the poligar and in Kallar Nadu a council of elders presided over by a tribal chief called *nattar* controlled the administration.[5] The district consisted of *parganas* or *mahals* each of which was subdivided into numerous villages, called *gramams, samudrams, urs* or *pattis*.

Certain trends in the governmental system appeared conspicuous. The political set up inclined towards absolutism as under the nayaks. The nawab or the rajah or the poligar succeeded to power by the right of inheritance. The inhabitants in general favoured kingships, though in Kallar Nadu they elected a council of elders. The Maravas venerated the setupati considering him as the guardian of the sacred waters and the pagoda of Rameswaram. Besides wielding unlimited authority by themselves, the rulers left their officers with large powers. Maphuz Khan, the Governor of Madurai, Manakji, the Minister of Thanjavur and Damodara Pillai, the Dewan of Ramanathapuram exercised both civil and military control. These factors contributed to the autocratic practices in the land.

3. Rajah Tulaji, 8 October, 1777, Letter to Madras Council, *Ibid*. Vol. 16, pp. 166-167.
4. Board of Assigned Revenue, 5 November, 1781, Proceedings Vol. 1, p. 11.
5. B. S. Ward, *Geographical and Statistical Memoir of Madura and Dindigul*, Vol. 3, p. 6.

However, at the lowest level in the administrative ladder, the village communities with their headmen and councils kept alive a representative tradition of the tribal past. The rulers of the eighteenth century not only did not disturb their existence but wisely utilised their services, though that was for the promotion of their own interests.

Constituents of the Village

A village consisted of a residential area divided into wards, cultivated lands, waste lands, water courses, burning ground and temple. The villagers constructed houses in the residential area, for which the land was given freely or acquired on the payment of a nominal fee. They distributed the cultivable lands among themselves Redistribution was effected at fixed times by lot, but the tendency was to retain permanent possession of fields once allotted. When waste lands were brought under the plough, shares were given to the landholders or allotted to the new members of the village. When the season commenced, the ryots assembled together, determined the quantum of water in the tank and apportioned it out to each according to the extent of land he possessed.[6]

The village was often surrounded by forests and this was usually the case in the poligar and Kallar territories. They served asbarriers against invaders, supplie dfire-wood and were used as grazing fields.[7] The temple was the centre of cultural life. It was a place of worship as well as of gathering in the mornings and in the evenings. The votaries prayed to the village deity for protection against all calamities and for sustenance.[8] The village community possessed the ownership of the village lands and institutions. It supervised the re-distribution of land and the apportionment of water for cultivation. The conviction

6. S. R. Lushington, 29 December 1800, Report to Madras Council, p. 17
7. C. S. Srinivasachari, *Village Organization in the Madras Presidency*, pp. 1-2.
8. S. S. Raghavaiangar, *Progress of the Madras Presidency during the Last Forty Years*, pp. 218-223.

was that the land was a preperty dedicated for the support of sacrifices to the deceased members and for the sustenance of those living and still to come to life, as it was the case among the Red Indians of America.

Administrative Establishment

Each village had its headman, subordinate officials and a local council. The office of the headman was hereditary but it was subjcet to forfeiture on his incurring the displeasure of the council on any account. Assisted by the village servants, the headmen served as an intermediary between the village and the government and distributed responsibilities, whether they were related to taxes or service. The elders of the village served on the governing council. The form of representation varied from village to village. In a multi-communal village the headmen of the different communities assumed membership.[9] On the other hand in the more democratically constituted villages all the land holders served on the council.[10] The influence with a caste or holding of land served as the guilding principle of representation.

The headman of the village called as *patel* or *mocaddam* and usually appointed by the village council, but at times by the poligar or the amuldar, held his office on a hereditary basis. But if he was found incapable of discharging his duties either because of sickness or minority or misconduct, his relative, failing which another person was elevated to the office.[11] The *patel* performed the duties of a collector or revenue magistrate and a judge within his limited sphere. He collected the taxes assessed for the village and the levies necessary for meeting the common expenses of the community. As magistrate, he supervised the administration of law and order and controlled the *kavalkars* or village watchmen. Being the judge, he settled

9. Sewel's List, Copper Plate No. 65A.
10. C. S. Srinivasachari, *Village Organisation in the Madras Presidency*, pp. 1-2.
11. Selections from the Records of Fort St. George, No. 8.

petty cases assisted by a local jury called the *panchayat* or *panchayam*. His decision was subject to an appeal to the poligar or amuldar of the district. However, he exercised no jurisdiction over the cases which related to caste or religious discipline, for they fell under the authority of the chiefs of communal or religious sects.[12]

The patel was assisted by the *karnam* or *putwary*, who was the village accountant. The *karnams* were of two groups -*kudi karnams*, who were village officials and the *circar karnams*, who were government servants. The *karnam* kept a *rosham* or register of the details of the holdings of land. The *karnam* recorded the information regarding cultivation and revenue, the transactions made by the villagers and maintained the copies of the regulations issued by the rulers from time to time.[13] He was in fact the general scribe for the village. It was his office that guided the administration in deciding the rights of the individuals on land and helped the village in keeping itself informed of the government regulations.

The *kavalkars* or *talayaris* performed police duties. There were *arasu kavalkars*, *nadu kavalkars*, *desai kavalkars* and *stalam kavalkars*-*arasu* meaning government, *nadu* district, *desai* or *desam* direction or region and *stalam* place or village. They kept watch at night, noted the arrivals and departures, observed the proceedings of the strangers and reported all suspicious persons to the *patel*. Besides, they apprehended the persons guilty of robbery or murder and took them to the *patel* for punishment. When a theft occurred, a *kavalkar* assisted by investigators called *visarippukarans* tracked the thief by tracing the footprints. In case he eastablished that the thief went out of the limits of his village, then it was them duty of his counter-part in the next village to take up the work in pursuit. The last village to which the

12. With the introduction of the judicial reform under the Permanent Revenue Settlement, the *patel* was deprived of his judicial powers.

13. Correspondence relating to the Revision of Village Revenue Establishments of the Madras Presidency, 1867, Part I, p. ii-iv.

thief was clearly traced would be made answerable for the stolen property; which would otherwise fall on the village where the robbery was committed. The *kavalkar* was required to restore the stolen property to its owner. If he failed to do it, he was obliged to make good for the loss to the extent of his means and the remainder was levied on the whole village.[14] This indicates that the protection of properties was provided for by the individual responsibility of the *kavalkar* and the collective responsibility of the village. However, the institution of *kavalkars* went into decay during the second half of the eighteenth century.

The *patel* convened a *panchayat* for the settlement of cases. There were different ways of constituting this jury. The first was by nomination, one by the *patel* and two each by either party. This provision was open to abuse, for the persons nominated by the parties frequently took sides against each other. Therefore another method was tried. The *patel* nominated some five to fifteen persons. The parties were entitled to challenge such nominations, which in their opinion appeared objectionable and get them changed if their reasons proved justified. At times only the heads of the different communities of the village sat on the jury. If the dispute was related to a share of village land, owned in common, all the land holders had the right to sit on the *panchayat*.[15] Among the Totiens the headmen of the sub-castes formed themselves into a jury. In Kallar Nadu the chief and the elder men of each *nadu* met in an assembly at their usual meeting place under a large tree, heard complaints, discussed the details and passed sentences. Nevertheless, the jury system was widely prevalent in the Tamil Country as in England.[16]

14. *Village Communities in South India*, (Connemara Library, Madras) p. 55.
During the Vijayanagar period the people themselves made their arrangements with regard to police. (T. V. Mahalingam, *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar*, p. 133)
15. Selections from the Records of Fort St. George, No. 9.
16. *Ibid.*, No. 2.

The jury passed a decision after hearing both the sides. If the determination of a crime baffled solution, it resorted to trial by boiled ghee. The *panchayat* performed this trial with great solemnity and the people implicitly believed in its infallibility during those days of superstition.[17]

The *panchayat* at its local level served as a corrective to the anarchic conditions of the eighteenth century. If a litigant had no such body to settle his cause, he obtained no settlement at all. It was found suitable to the times, when the people lent money without receipt or gave a bond for more than what they actually received or paid the loan without getting back the bond, when written engagements were practically unknown and the persons had to rely upon verbal promises. Familiar with the local customs and acquainted with the day to day affairs of the village, the *panchayat* appeared well informed to settle the petty suits. However it was not free from defects. The litigants found it extremely difficult to get an award from the jury and when it was obtained, they experienced greater difficulty in enforcing it. The *patel* kept a list of names and whenever there was a necessity he nominated a few out of it. Here ended all appearance of regularity. What usually followed was a course of dispute, bribery, intrigue, wrangling and contention, each obstructing further procedure[18]. Though it appeared good in principle, the jury was thus susceptible to local influence and obstructionism.

In addition to police and judicial establishments, there were numerous other servants. The village shroff sorted out all the collection. The village astrologer indicated the auspicious moments and lucky days for beginning important functions. The snake charmer kept the village clear of snakes and attended on any person who was bitten. In addition there were priests physicians, dancing masters, dancing girls, trumpeters, drum-

17. B. S. Ward, *Geographical and Statistical Memoir of Madura and Dindigul*, Vol. 3, pp. 3-7.

18. Selections from the Fort St. George, No. 11.

mers, shoe makers, barbers, agricultural labourers and scavengers. The *toties* who were the scavengers of the village were of three categories - the first group measured the grain and lands, the second attended to the distribution of water for irrigation and the third took care of the water courses. Besides they attended on the *patel* and carried out his orders.[19]

No uniform system of remunerating the local servants remained in force. It was by land or grain or money. Land was given on a nominal rent or free of rent. This service land called as *inaum* or *maniam* and granted either by the state or the village or both formed the remuneration of the holder. If an office holder was replaced by another, the land was transferred to the person and if the land was retained by the former holder, the assessment was made over to the incoming officer. The service lands were for the most part of very ancient date, they were probably assignments made by the village community with the sanction of the state. Still the ruler claimed the right of resumption of rent free lands and frequently exercised that right by assessing them to the general revenue. As years went, these lands passed from one generation to another, divided and sub-divided. In consequence one shareholder or a few share-holders by turn or by distribution of work, performed the duties of the office, while others merely enjoyed the profits of land. Thus a part of the emolument intended for an office was virtually lost. Fees which formed another source of paying the local officials were for the most part collections of grain made by themselves directly from the peasants. By their very nature they were very irregular. In villages where there were no *maniams* or fees or where they had been resumed or had gone unproductive, the circar or the village paid the servants out of the general revenues.[20]

19. Sewell's List, Copper Plate No. 60224 and Report of the Board of Revenue on the Tiruvendipuram Farm, 177, pp. 5-6.

20. Correspondence relating to the Revision of Village Revenue Establishments of the Madras Presidency, Part I, pp. vi-viii.

Impact of Calamities

Famines, epidemics and wars afflicted the villages from time to time. Severe famines struck the country in 1732-33, 1762-63, 1784-85 and 1798-99. While the first and the third were caused by the vandalism committed by the forces engaged in the civil wars and the Mysore wars, the second and the fourth by the failure of the monsoon. In times of famine it was not uncommon to see "the infant dying on the breast of the mother, the old and the young, the parents and the children mingling their last groans" and "the whole families of spectres in human shape digging in the untails of a dead carrion and when these means have failed, surrendering themselves with 'a truly Asiatic apathy' to the wild dogs and vultures that waited to devour their carcasses".[21]

Epidemics wrought havoc year after year. They swept off every year five to ten per cent of the population[22]. Ignorant of the medical science, the people attributed the natural calamities to the wrath of their goddess, Bhadra Kali.[23] Conflicts and disorders too disturbed the security of the village communities. On the approach of hostile forces the villagers buried their cumbrous effects underground. Lead by the head man of the community, men, women and children with loads of grain proportioned to their strength issued forth from their beloved villages. Reaching the most unfrequented jungles, they lead a miserable existence. If the departure of force was delayed beyond the period for which they had provisions for subsistence or if they were robbed of the grain by the other hungry communities, they inevitably perished of hunger. Nevertheless the village-communities faced their ordeals in a spirit of mutual belonging.[24]

21. William Fullarton, 13 August 1784, Letter to Lord Macartney, Military Sundries, Vol. 66. p. 212.
22. T. Turnbull. *Geographical and Statistical Memoir of Tirunelveli*, p. 14.
23. Tatarappa Mudali, 7 April, 1757, Letter to Madras Council, Military Country Correspondence, Vol. 5, p. 7.
24. Mark Wilks, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

The village autonomy was a legacy bequeathed by the early political systems. Though desolated and decayed by wars, famines and epidemics, these villages mostly with their same limits and same interests continued to survive. It appears that the inhabitants remained almost unconcerned about political changes, so long as their villages remained entire and autonomous. The English interfered in local affairs when they took over *kaval* from the poligars in 1799, but after they assumed the administration in 1801, they preserved these simple municipal governments, at times regulating their jusridiction.[25]

25. By the Karnam Regulation of 1802 a record office under the control of the *karnam* was established in every village. In 1816 the rights and duties of the *patel* were defined in accordance with early usages. In the same year the *kavalkars* were enjoined to perform their customary duties but were relieved of their liability to compensate for the loss by theft. In 1831 the Board of Revenue assumed the right to supervise the hereditary village servants and to punish the erring. In 1860 the Government instead of the villages began to pay for local servants. As the result of these changes the local bodies lost much of their freedom.

Chapter XV

BRITISH ASCENDANCY

After a brief period of glory, the Wallajahs entered the road to decline. The English East India Company asserted its supremacy. The restoration of Thanjavur to the Marathas, the outbreak of wars with Mysore, the assignment and assumption of the revenues of the Carnatic and the imposition of a treaty upon the Wallajahs contributed to the British ascendancy. As a result the Wallajahs ceased to be a political factor in the country.

A turning point came in 1775 when the Court of Directors of the Company condemned the proceedings of the Madras Council in the conquest of Thanjavur and sent Lord Pigot as Governor to restore the state to Tulaji. Lord Pigot sought the Nawab's concurrence to effect the change; but the exasperated Mohammad Ali declaring categorically that the decision of the Company injured his dignity as well as his interests, demanded the revocation of the orders.[1] But the Governor argued: "Humanity to the wretched inhabitants distressed beyond measure by the miserable state in which the country now remains, without any established Government either of your highness or the Rajah, justice to the Rajah who is scarcely better than a prisoner still and attention to the Public Honour make it absolutely necessary to carry into immediate effect the orders of the Company".[1] Understanding the determination of Lord Pigot, Mohammad Ali agreed to give no opposition to the execution of the Company's orders; but persisted in the refusal of his concurrence.[2]

In February 1776 the Company's troops obtained control

1. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 6 March 1776, Vol. 25, p. 14.
2. Lord Pigot's Narrative, 1776, p. 1.

of the country. Lord Pigot on 11th April presided over the formal restoration of the throne to Tulaji. The Rajah was given possession of the districts of Koilody, Elangad, Vallam and Nagore, but the Nawab retained possession of Arni and Hanumantgudi though they too constituted parts of Thanjavur in 1762.[3] The Company now imposed a new settlement on the state. The Rajah agreed to render no assistance to the enemies of the Company and to enter into no relations with other powers without the consent of the Madras Council. He permitted the English to garrison the forts in his kingdom in the name of protection, but himself cut down his armed strength to 500 men. In return for British protection the Rajah agreed to pay twelve lakhs of rupees a year; and ceded Nagore yielding an annual revenue of two and half lakhs.[4]

Thanjavur re-emerged as a kingdom, but its position was not enviable as it had been in 1762. It lost the districts of Nagore, Hanumantgudi and Arni and the right to maintain an armed establishment. While its armed strength was curtailed, its forts were garrisoned by European troops. As a vassal state of the Carnatic it was required to pay under the Treaty of 1762 a tribute of four lakhs to the Nawab but as a protected state of the English it was forced to pay twelve lakhs. While its political status went down, its financial obligations increased considerably. In 1762 the state undertook to pay four lakhs as tribute to the Nawab, but in 1776 it was required to shoulder a burden of twenty two and half lakhs, of which the Rajah paid four lakhs to the Nawab and twelve lakhs to the Company and incurred an annual loss of four lakhs on account of the cession of Nagore to the Company.

The loss of Thanjavur had very adverse repercussions on the rising power of the Nawab. Mohammad Ali not only

3. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 26 December, 1778, Vol. 27, p. 386.
4. C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties* etc , Vol. 5, No. 47 and Military Country Correspondence, 26 December 1778, Vol. 27, p. 386.

lost the newly gained possession, but the settlement of 1776 ignored to mention anything about his relation with the state. Presuming that the settlements made by Mohammad Ali before 1776 remained in force, the exercise of his sovereignty was restricted to the right of receiving an annual tribute of four lakhs. Besides, the unexpected deprival of a source of revenue dislocated the Nawab's finances. Mohammad Ali incurred considerable expenditure for assembling the forces for the expedition, for giving presents to the English and the Marathas, for repairing forts and for undertaking a land survey in Thanjavur.[5] No doubt he exacted a large amount from the territory, still the sudden cut in his revenue upset his finances that were conditioned to increased expenditure. Embarrassed by adverse circumstances, the Nawab now found himself constantly harassed by the clamours of disbanded troops to whom he owed the arrears of pay and besieged by a crowd of whom he assigned the revenues of Thanjavur. These troubles kept him so fully engaged that he was compelled to abandon his dreams of greatness.

When he found his radiant hopes dashed to the ground, he diverted all his vast powers of intrigue for giving embarrassment to Tulaji and Lord Pigot. Seeking to throw the Rajah's administration into disorder, he not only destroyed the revenue records, but also removed the revenue servants from the state.[6] Also he fomented division in the Council of Fort St. George and brought about the arrest of Lord Pigot. His struggle to regain possession of the state continued, but without gaining any ground. During the Second Mysore War (1780-1784) he strove hard to get the verdict of the Court of Directors reversed. He even promised to appropriate the collections from Thanjavur for the conduct of the war and liquidation of his debt to the English, but with no result. It was a paradox that he lost

5. Military Correspondence, Madras, 26 February 1776, Vol. 25, pp. 2-10.
6. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 13 June 1776, Vol 55, p. 486.

the residuary rights too. Unable to pay the Company for the defence of the Carnatic against Haidar Ali's invasion, he had to surrender his right to the receipt of tribute from the state to the English after reserving a grain of corn for himself as a mark of his sovereignty.[7]

Rebellion in Marava States

The expansion of Wallajah authority received another check with the outbreak of a rebellion in Marava states. Despite his rule for six years the Nawab failed to win over the inhabitants. The Maravas, who were peasants as well as soldiers, had the advantage of fighting the invaders at their choice and returning to the fields as the circumstances warranted. The overthrow of their royal institutions and confiscation of their lands drove them to the arena of conflict. In alliance with the Kallar tribes they set up posts in jungles and committed depredations into circar territories. They raided the camps set up by the English and the forts held by the Wallajahs. The rebels led by Mappila Tevar occupied most of the territory and drove the administration to the fortified places.[8]

In Sivaganga too the rebellion broke out. Vella Marudu and Chinna Marudu, the two servants of Udaya Tevar, who died in battle against the Nawab's forces, won the support of a body of troops of Haidar Ali and desolated the circar territory. Upon their advance to Sivaganga the people rallied to them. They expelled the forces of the Nawab and proclaimed Vellachi, daughter of Udaya Tevar, as the queen of Sivaganga. The Marudus assumed the administration as ministers. As the situation went out of control, Mohammad Ali released from jail Muthuramalinga Tevar and enthroned him as the Setupati. The English accorded recognition to Muthuramalinga Tevar and Vellachi to the rulers of Marava states and settled peace.[9] As

7. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 21 July 1790, Vol. 39, p. 351.
8. *Ibid.*, 12 October 1772, Vol. 21, p. 236.
9. *Ibid.*, 12 December 1772, Vol. 21, pp. 282-283.

a result the Wallajahs lost their control of these territories.

Assignment and Assumption

The wars of the English with Mysore had their direct impact upon the Tamil Country. In 1780 the Second Mysore War broke out. For the effective conduct of the war, the Madras Council suggested to the Nawab to assign the revenues of his territory to the Company. Mohammad Ali opposed but subsequently agreed to a compromise by which he transferred the collection of revenue for a period of five years and retained one sixth of it for his private expenses. This was the assignment.[10] During this period a Committee of Assigned Revenue collected the taxes and maintained a regular supply of money, provisions and bullocks to the theatres of war. The interests of people and of their ruler suffered, while the English utilised the opportunity[11] to consolidate their authority.

Mohammad Ali in the mean time set himself vigorously at work for the revocation of the assignment. After a great deal of effort, the Company consented but he was required to sign a new settlement. By the Treaty of 1787 he agreed to pay nine lakhs of star pagodas[12] every year in support of the defence establishment, created by the English. In effect this amounted to his paying for a military system, maintained for controlling him too.[13]

In Thanjavur the Company created a succession issue for the sake of intervention. During the Second Mysore War Haidar Ali devastated the country and threw the economy of the kingdom out of order. Rajah Tulaji getting old and having no male child, adopted prince Sarafoji, a grandson of his near cousin, as heir to the throne and appointed his half brother

10. Aitchison, *Treaties and Engagements*, Vol. 5, p. 181.
11. Madras Council, Military Despatches to England, Vol 19, No. 41.
12. A pagoda was exchanged for Rs. 3 and star pagoda Rs. 3 1/2.
13. Madras Council, Military Despatches to England, 30 September 1783, Vol. 19, p. 19.

Amar Singh as the regent.[14] In 1787 he passed away. On hearing the death of the ruler, Governor Archibald Campbell proceeded to Thanjavur, declared the adoption illegal and elevated Amar Singh to the throne. In return for this service the new ruler accepted the Treaty of 1787, by which he agreed to pay four lakhs of star pagodas to the English for the defence of his kingdom.[15] The two treaties together imposed a heavy burden upon the Tamil districts. The rulers oppressed the people and contributed towards the consolidation of the Company's authority.

In April 1790 Tipu Sultan attacked the Lines of Travancore, a state allied to the English. In consequence Governor General Cornwallis formed a triple alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam against Mysore and mobilised forces. This marked the beginning of the Third Mysore War. Tipu Sultan advanced along the banks of the Kaveri and laid waste Srirangam. However, he suddenly withdrew, when the forces of the coalition threatened Mysore. The Mysorean incursion was isolated and the war was confined largely to the territories of Mysore. Still it offered an opportunity to the English to invoke the emergency clauses contained in the Treaty of 1787. Besides, the resources of the Company, though they were supplemented by four fifths of the revenues of the Carnatic and Thanjavur did not appear adequate to support the extensive military operations.[16] There were other causes too. Lulled into a state of security as granted by the Treaty of 1787, the Nawab attempted no improvement of his administration. The tyranny of his amuldars intensified and the ryots who groaned under a system of cruel oppression neglected cultivation, leading to the fall of revenue and default in the payments to the English. The bankruptcy of administration and default in payments convinced the Company that no dependence could be placed upon the rulers.

14. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 26 January 1787, Vol. 36, p. 7.
15. Treaties between Company and Tanjore, the Treaty of 1787.
16. Madras Council, Military Consultations, July 1791, Vol 136, p. 2086.

In the name of conducting the war efficiently it assumed the collection of revenue of the Carnatic and Thanjavur in 1790. This was the assumption.

The Board of Assumed Revenue, created for the management of revenue, exercised supervision over the collections. It entertained in its service the revenue servants of the Nawab and of the Rajah, and appointed collectors for the enforcement of collections. The new administration portioned out the districts into small allotments and farmed them out for one year periods with the object of minimising the risk against ransactions and evasion. It took precaution against renting out the estates to the over grown renters, who had for long excelled themselves in exaction. In Thanjavur the Comp any's two collectors set up a court of justice and functioned jointly in deciding the cases of property.[17]

The short duration of the Third Mysore War forced the Company to restore the administration to the Nawab and the Rajah in 1792. However, as a condition for the same, it imposed upon them more rigorous treaties—the Carnatic Treaty of 1792 and the Tanjore Treaty of 1793. Under these settlements the English stationed their army in their territories, garrisoned all the forts and brought the poligars under their direct authority. The Nawab agreed to contribute nine lakhs of star pagodas and the Rajah three and a half lakhs for the support of the English army. The two treaties reduced the two powers into mere tributaries, enabled the Company to suppress the poligars and to tighten their grip over the country.[18] The Nawab and the Rajah intensified their exactions for meeting the demands made by the British.

17. *Ibid.*, 8 November 1791, Vol. 154, p. 5678.
18. Aitchison, *Collection of Treaties* etc., Vol. 1, Treaty of the Carnatic 1792 and Treaty of Tanjore, 1793.

Chapter XVI

THE POLIGAR REBELLION

The English exercised direct authority over the poligars during the assignment and the assumption. By the terms of the Carnatic Treaty of 1792 they won the right to administer the poligar affairs. In addition to the usual tribute the chieftains were required to make frequent contributions and presents to the Company. The revenue servants forced them to send eggs, poultry and goats to the houses of their European masters. The chieftains on the other hand by tradition cherished a spirit of independence. With their own armed establishments and forts, they resented encroachments upon their rights. With a view to suppressing the poligars, the Company either under the authority of the Nawab or of its own sent frequent expeditions. The conflicts and raids alienated these chieftains from their cause and drove them to a state of hostility. They formed confederacies and fought against the invading forces. In 1797-98 Vira Pandya Kattabomman of Panjalamkurichi, guided by Marudu Pandyan of Sivaganga, organised the poligars of Tirunelveli against the English. This led to the outbreak of the Poligar Rebellion in 1798.

Humiliation of Kattabomman

Born in 1761 and Telugu by descent, Vira Pandya Kattabomman became the Poligar of Panjalamkurichi at the age of thirty on the death of his father, Jagavira Pandya Kattabomman. He belonged to a house of chieftains, who resisted British power in the past but for long he did not appear to have entertained any such hostile designs against them. The Campany's administrators, James London and Colin Jackson, had considered him as a man without education but of peaceful disposition. Yet several events led to his conflict with the Company. During this period the collection of tribute served as a constant and potential source of friction. The Nawab of Arcot exercised this right, but he surrendered it to the English under the

provisions of the Carnatic Treaty of 1792. The difficulty that the Nawab encountered in the enforcement of this right and the design of the Company to exploit the opportunities presented by it in curbing the influence of the chieftains accounted for this change. In September 1798 as the tribute from Panjalamkurichi fell into arrears, Collector Jackson in his characteristic arrogance, and rashness wrote letters to Vira Pandyan in a language of reprehension and remonstrance. Some scholars contend that he firmly rejected the British demand for payment of tribute. There is a tradition to indicate that Kattabomman declared: "It rains, the land yields, why should we pay tax to the English?" The Kallar tribes of Melur and Natham encountered the alien rulers posing to them the same question. Perhaps Kattabomman too made this remark to the revenue servants, but there is no evidence to indicate that he acted upon it. Had he done so, he would have been rash, for he would have invited a certain doom, serving the purpose of the enemy without gaining any objective.

By the 31st May 1798 the total arrears of tribure from Panjalamkurichi amounted to 3310 pagodas. The country experienced a severe drought in consequence of which, the Poligar found if difficult to collect taxes for payment of tribute.[1] Collector Jackson wanted to send an expedition to punish Vira Pandyan but the Madras Council did not agree. The Company had already withdrew its forces from Tirunelveli to be employed in the war against Tipu Sultan of Mysore and did not desire to risk a conflict in the far South at this juncture. It directed the Collector to summon the Poligar to his *cutcherry* at Ramanathapuram.[2] Accordingly on the 18th of August 1798 Jackson despatched an order directing Vira Pandyan to attend on him at Ramanathapuram within two weeks. After sending the summons, the Collector started on a tour of Tirunelveli. On the 27th of August when he reach-

1. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 27 September, 1798, Vol. 88, pp. 3084-3093.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 3206.

ed Tirukuttalam, Kattabomman with his retinue waited on him, but the Collector refused an interview.[3] In the words of Kattabomman: "I prepared money, for the payment of the *kist* and when I intended to set out against my health, Mr. Jackson came to Tirukuttalam, which place I reached with the money in full for payment of the Compay's kist".[4] When Jackson halted at Chokkumpatti, Sivagiri, Sattur and Srivilliputtur to receive tribute from the poligars, Vira Pandyan sought an interview but was told that he could meet the Collector only at Ramanathapuram.[5] Despite this humiliation, so mortifying as it was, Kattabomman followed the Englishman for twenty three days in a journey of 400 miles through the latter's route and reached Ramanathapuram on the 19th of September. An interview was granted the same day and the Collector ramarked that the Poligar did well in obeying the orders, by which he probably saved himself from ruin. Upon a verification of accounts Jackson was convinced that Kattabomman cleared most of the arrears by the 31st of August leaving only 1090 *pagodas* as balance. Denied of seats, the Poligar and his Minister, Sivasubramonia Pillai, had to stand before the arrogant Collector for three hours together. Still he did not permit them to leave the place, but directed them to stay inside the fort. Now a few sepoys appeared, apparently to arrest the chief. Immediately the deaf and dumb brother of Vira Pandyan, Oomathurai, who was keeping a constant watch from an unnoticed corner, spread an alarm among the followers, waiting nearby. While the Poligar and his Minister combining alarm with annoyance forced their way out, their followers rushed to their rescue.[6] At the gate of the fort there followed a clash, in which some people including Lieutenant Clarke were killed. Sivasubramonia Pillai was taken prisoner

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 3084-3093.
4. Kattabomma Nayak, 25 September 1779, Letter to Lord Clive, translation, Revenue Consultations, Vol 88, p. 3111.
5. Madras Council, *Ibid.*, September, 1789, Vol, 88, pp. 3111-3113.
6. Board of Revenue, Consultations, 11 April 1799, Vol. 244, p. 3070

but Kattabomman made his escape.[7] On their way to Panjalamkurichi the armed men of the Poligar looted the bazaar of Ramanathapuram and carried off a rich booty.[8]

After his return to Panjalamkurichi, Kattabomman wrote letters to Madras Council attributing the conflict at Ramanathapuram to the rashness of the Collector and requesting the release of his Minister.[9] Governor Edward Clive in the mean time issued a proclamation, inviting the Poligar to submit to the authority of the Company. In the event of surrender he assured a fair investigation into the incident and in case of refusal he threatened the chief with serious displeasure of the government.[10] To remove all causes of suspicion and dissidence on the part of Vira Pandyan he suspended Jackson from office and released Subramonia Pillai from custody.[11] In response Kattabomman decided to submit. As a mark of it he paid a visit to the committee, with William Brown, William Oram and John Casmayor as members, appointed to enquire into the incident.[12] The committee instituted an enquiry and in its report acquitted the Poligar of the charges of rebellion but condemned the conduct of the Collector. It asserted that there was no unnecessary delay on the part of the Poligar in complying with the summons from the Collector, but the manner in which he was forced to follow Jackson for twenty three days though the territories of the inferior chieftains was indeed humiliating and that the rigour which attended the treatment meted out to him at Ramanathapuram had so much alarmed him for his personal safety, that he made his escape. However, as one

7. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 27 September 1798, Vol. 88, pp. 3113-3119.
8. J. F. Kearns, *Panjalamkurichy Poligars and the State of Tinnevelly*, Palayamkottai, 1863, pp. 1-7.
9. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 2 October 1798, Vol. 88, pp. 3111-3118.
10. *Ibid.*, 13 October 1798, Vol. 88, pp. 3213-3214.
11. *Ibid.*, 14 October 1798, Vol. 89, pp. 3219-3220.
12. *Ibid.*, 21 December 1798, Vol 92, pp. 5416-5417.

of his pike-men stabbed Clarke to death, the Poligar was required to make a provision equal to the salary and allowance of the victim for the support of his family.[13] S. R. Lushington was now appointed Collector in the place of Jackson, who was eventually dismissed from service.

League of the Poligars

Thus the English removed the source of grievance to Kattabomman. The verdict of the committee seemed as not unfair and the attitude of the Madras Government appeared not unconciliatory. Yet in the background of the humiliation, that he suffered, the positive factors that led him to the path of defiance were the influence of Marudu Pandyan and the opportunity presented by the Fourth Mysore War. Marudu Pandyan of Sivaganga in close association with Gopala Nayak of Dindigul and Yadul Nayak of Anamalai was during this period engaged in the organisation of a South Indian Confederacy of rebels against the British with the declared objective of liberating the country from the control of the 'low wretches' as he depicted the English in his Tiruchirapalli Proclamation.[14] The rebel missions that he sent to the southern regions visited Panjalamkurichi. In view of the identity af interests this led to the establishment of close association between Kattabomman and Marudu Pandyan. Since then, Vira Pandyan held frequent consultations with Marudu. On the 1st of June 1799 he, attended by 500 men, reached Palamaneri with the intention of proceeding to Sivaganga.[15] But Collector Lushington considering it as a step taken in contempt of British authority, conveyed his serious apprehension.[16] Therefore the Poligar waited at Palamaneri for the arrival of the emissaries of Marudu. On the 5th a party reached the camp and the two groups held

13. *Ibid.*, 21 December 1798, Vol. 94, pp. 554-561.
14. Tiruchirapalli Proclamation of Marudu Pandyan, Revenue Sundries, 16 June 1801, Vol. 26, pp. 447-452.
15. Board of Revenue, Consultations, 10 June 1799, Vol 229, pp. 4853-4854.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 4859.

deliberations. Subsequently joined by 500 armed men of Sivaganga, Kattabomman returned to Panjalamkurichi. The details of the deliberations are not known, yet this meeting indicates the importance that the rebel leaders gave to mutual consultations.[17]

The employment of British forces against Mysore offered the needed opportunity to Kattabomman to strengthen his influence. No difficult task faced him in attaining this end. The poligars of Nagalapuram, Mannarkottai, Powalli, Kolarpatti and Chennulgudi had already formed themselves into a combination due to the efforts of Marudu of Sivagana and Melappan of Ramanathapuram for asserting their right to collect taxes from certain villages in the Company's territory.[18] What Kattabomman proceeded to do was to join this league and to assume its leadership by virtue of the influence that he commanded and resources that he possessed. Determined to strengthen this league, he persuaded the chieftains of Saptoor, Yezhayirampannai, Kadalgudi and Kulattur to join it.[19] In August he sent Sevatiah, Vira Pandya Nayak and Virabhadra Pillai on a mission to Elavarasanur and won the alliance of the Kallars.[20] He sent Pandia Pillai, brother of Sivasubramonia Pillai. to Madras to gather and transmit intelligence about the British military movements[21] and placed guards at different places to watch for the Europeans and their agents.[22]

The events now moved to a crisis. In August 1798 the son of the Poligar of Sivagiri and his adviser Mappilai Vannian visited Panjalamkurichi and held consultations. Kattabomman decided to establish his influence in Sivagiri with the aid of

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 4883-4891.
18. *Ibid.*, 13 June 1799, Vol. 222, p. 4891.
19. Board of Revenue, Consultations, August 1799, Vol. 231, p. 2905.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 2909.
21. *Ibid.*, November 1799, Vol. 98, p. 2716.
22. *Ibid.*, 24 September 1798, Vol. 88, pp. 3121-3123.

the son of the Poligar, as the ruling chief refused to join the alliance of the rebels. Added to this Panjalamkurichi, being situated in an open plain, appeared vulnerable to the hostile forces and hence the possession of an unassilable stronghold was considered an absolute necessity. The strategic location of the fort of Sivagiri at the foot of the Western Ghats and the formidable barriers around it rendered it eminently suited both for offensive as well as defensive operations in the event of any emergency. Major Gramme of the Company's army asserted that Kattabomman's "Design in marching peons against Sivagiri is to get possession either by force or treachery that fort and a narrow Pass which leads to it, difficult of passage where he bopes to stand his ground against the force which he fears naturally suggest to him to be sent to punish.,.[23] Thus in a bold attempt to strengthen his position an armed column consisting of the followers of Vira Pandyan, the son of the Poligar of Sivagiri, and other allied chiefs, led by Delawai Kumaraswami Nayak, moved to the west. But as the Poligar of Sivagiri was a tributary to the Company, the Madras Council considered this move as a challenge to its own authority and ordered the march of the army.[24]

An assessment of this development indicates that Kattabomman committed no serious offence against British authority as to provoke any violent reprisal. Though the Poligar of Sivagiri paid tribute to the Company, as provided by the Carnatic Treaty of 1792, he was the subject of the Nawab and not of the English. As such the right of intervention in a conflict between two subjects fell within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Nawab. Besides, the son of the Poligar of Sivagiri, as a member of the alliance, served as a party in this venture and no complaint was preferred by the father against his son. In

23. S. R. Lushington, 21 August 1799, Letter to Board of Revenue, Board of Revenue Consultations, Vol. 231, pp. 6903-6904.

24. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, September 1799, Vol. 97, pp. 2418-2420.

spite of these the English decided on military operations against Kattabomman in disregard to the sovereignty of the Nawab. It was because the Company decided to utilise the opportunity to carry into effect the orders of the Court of Directors that "all subordinate military establishnments should be annihilated within the limits now subject to our dominion".[25] This is confirmed by Governor General Lord Wellesley's instructions to Major Bannerman for military operations: "the rebellious conduct of Catabomanaig, (Kattabomma Nayak) Poligar of Pandalamcourchy (Panjalamkurichi) having rendered it necessary to equip a military force for the purpose of suppressing the commotions excited by him, the Right Honourable Governor General has resolved to avail himself of this opportunity, to carry into effect the orders of the Honourable Court of Directors for disarming the whole of the Southern Poligars and for reducing those irregular chieftains to the authority of the Civil Government".[26] Thus the British attitude towards Vira Pandyan represented a definite attempt to enforce an already formulated policy, aimed at the liquidation of the poligari system. The needed opportunity was presented by the termination of war with Mysore and the expedition of Kattabomman to Sivagiri. The war against Mysore ended in complete victory early in May 1799 and the Company now found it possible to send the forces against the poligars.

Expedition to Panjalamkurichi

In May 1799 Lord Wellesley issued orders from Madras for the advance of forces from Tiruchirapalli, Thanjavur and Madurai to Tirunelveli. The troops of the Rajah of Travancore joined the enemy.[27] Major Bannerman, armed with extensive powers for effectively dealing with the poligars, assumed the command of the expedition. Advancing through Ramanatha-

25. *Ibid.*, 13 August 1802, Vol. 118, p. 2690.
26. J. Webbe, 19 August 1799, Letter to John Bannerman, Secret Sundries, Vol. 26, pp. 389-390.
27. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 28 May 1799, Vol. 253, p. 3031.

puram, the army reached Tirunelveli. On the 1st of September, 1799 the Major served an ultimatum directing Kattabomman to attend on him at Palayamkottai on the 4th.[28] The Poligar replied: "As I am a person thinking to be every submissive to the Honourable Company and obey their orders, there is no hesitation to attend on you, and obey your commands, but there is no lucky day at present, when there is, I will attend and obey your orders".[29] Bannerman considered this reply as evasive and decided on military action. As surprise was essential for a quick victory, the army by forced marches reached Panjalamkurichi on the 5th of September. Kattabomman's fort was an irregular parallelogram, 500 feet long and 300 feet broad. Constructed entirely of mud, it had square bastions and short curtains.[30]

Upon their arrival the forces cut off the communications of the fort. A large body of peons sallied from the villages for the defence of threatened citadel, but were repulsed and driven back with heavy loss. Ramalingam Mudaliar, whom Bannerman deputed to the fort with a message asking for surrender, which Kattabomman rejected, gathered the secrets about the vulnerable points in the defences. As an act of betrayal, he reported to the enemy that there had existed a wide breach in the bastion east of the main gate of the fort, that no preparation had been made to barricade the inner part of the gate and that the fort itself was guarded by only 1200 to 1500 men. On the basis of this report, which clearly suggested that Kattabomman anticipated no hostile move, Bannerman decided the strategy of operations.[31]

The plan of operation appeared well co-ordinated. The

28. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, September 1799. Vol. 98, pp. 97-102.
29. Kattabomman, 2 September 1799, palm leaf letter, trans., *Ibid.*, Vol. 98, p. 2706.
30. J. Welsh, *Military Reminiscences*, Vol. 1. p. 61.
31. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 11 November 1799, Vol. 98, pp. 1777-1785.

flank companies with a six pounder were ordered to blow up the south gate, field pieces to cover the storming party and a combined detachment of the Company, Ettayapuram and Travancore to attack the north face of the fort. The signal

Native Infantry of the British
(from J. Welsh, Military Reminiscences)

for assault being given a heavy cannonade broke open the gate. The storming party advanced with order to fight its way to the breach, but found itself unequal to the task. The troops of the Poligar, directed by the indomitable Oomathurai (Kumaraswamy Nayak), held their ground and threw back the hostile columns. Restored to order, the assailants made a determined attack but were defeated. So gallant was the resistance offered by the rebels that successive attacks were repeatedly repulsed.[32] The disconfiture of the enemy appeared unconvincing, for the peons of the Poligar appearing on every part of the wall were at once shot dead. But in the immediate defence of the breach,

32. *Panchalamkurichi Azhivu Charithira Kummi*, Leaves No 82-86.

the rebels from their wonderfully concealed and sheltered enclaves wielded the sharp pikes and wrought havoc upon the enemy. Overwhelmed with melancholy recollections, Bannerman wrote to Madras government: "The attempt was persevered in so long as there was a shadow of success and never was European energy more gallantly displayed than by the officers on this unfortunate occasion...".[33] In a bid to retrieve the tarnished prestige, the enemy ordered for the arrival of more troops. On the 16th reinforcements reached from Palayamkottai. As the broken walls appeared vulnerable, the rebel garrison evacuated, taking its course towards Kadalgudi.[34] In a clash at Kolarpatti the rebels suffered heavy casuality and Sivasubramonia Pillai was taken prisoner. The British forces followed up their victory with the reduction of Nagalapuram and other strongholds of the defiant chiefs to submission. On the appearance of the army the western poligars too surrendered.[35]

Vijaya Raghunatha Tondaiman, Poligar of Pudukkottai, captured Kattambomman from the jungles of Kalapore and handed him over to the enemy. He reported to Collector Lushington: "on every side of the mountains I had placed my people to find out the hiding place of Kattabomman. He, Oomathurai, his two brothers-in-law and three others were surrounded at Kalapore on the borders of Sivaganga and caught. When Kattabomman was seized, he wished to have slain himseif, but my people having bound his hands kept him in confinement".[36] Upon the fall of the Poligar into the hands of the enemy, his followers fled to Sivaganga and from there to the hills of Dindigul for joining the camp of Marudu Pandyan and Gopala Nayak.[37]

33. Bannerman, 5 September 1799, Letter to Webbe, Revenue Consultations, Vol. 98, pp. 2706-2711.
34. Madras Council, *Ibid.*, 8 November 1799, Vol 98, pp. 2713-2718.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 2724-2733.
36. Tondaiman, 24 September 1799, Letter to Lushington, Board of Revenue, Consultations, Vol. 235, pp. 8069-8070.
37. *Ibid.*, 5 March 1801, Vol. 275, p. 2553.

Fall of the Poligars

Bannerman brought the prisoners to an assembly of the poligars and after a mockery of trial sentenced them to death. Soundara Pandyan of Nagalapuram was executed at Gopalapuram and Sivasubramonia Pillai at Nagalapuram on the 13th of September.[38] On the 16th of October Vira Pandyan was tried before an assembly of poligars, summoned at Kayattar. In an assertive tone and with a contempt for death he admitted the charges levelled against him. He stated that he sent his armed men against Sivagiri and that he engaged the British troops in battle at Panjalamkurichi. Thereupon Bennerman announced death penalty for the victim. On the 17th of October Kattabomman was hanged to death at a conspicuous spot near the old fort of Kayattar. About his last moments Bannerman wrote to Madras: "It may not be amiss here to observe that the manner and behaviour of the Poligar during the whole time of his being before those who were assembled yesterday at the examination, which took place, were undaunted and supercilious. He frequently eyed the Etiapore (Ettayapuram) poligar, who had been so active in attempting to secure his person, and the Poligar of Sivagiri with an appearance of indignant scorn, and when he went out to be executed, he walked with a firm and daring air and cast looks of sullen contempt on the Poligars to his right and left, as he passed. It was reported to me that in his way to the place of execution he expressed some anxiety for his dumb brother (Oomathurai) alone and said, when he reached the foot of the Tree, on which he was hanged, that he then regretted having left his fort, in the defence of which it would have been better for him to have died."[39]

Vira Pandyan faced the last moments of his life with the pride of a hero. However the question that is raised is whether

38. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 8 November 1799, Vol. 98, pp. 2741-2747.
39. Bannerman, 7 October 1799, Letter to J. Webbe, *Ibid*., Vol 98, pp. 2877-2882.

he can be considered as a rebel. He paid tribute to the Company and followed the Collector for twenty three days, exposing thereby to humiliation. At the same time he identified himself with the anti-British league organised by Marudu Pandyan and Gopala Nayak, assumed the leadership of the rebel poligars of Tirunelveli, placed guards to watch the hostile moves made by the enemy and sought to strengthen his position by gaining possession of the strategic fort of Sivagiri. An analysis of the behaviour of the poligars of this period indicates that it was guided by the maxim, as laid down in the *Panchathantra*. It was their policy to pretend submission and procrastinate before the formidable enemy till they found an opportunity for gaining victory. No wonder Vira Pandyan too resorted to procrastination, but before he could organise a widespread rebellion and gain the support of the rebel leagues, he was defeated in a surprise attack and was executed.

After the suppression of the Poligar Rebellion, the Company took effective measures for the consolidation of its authority. Edward Clive, the Governor, confiscated the palayams of the rebels and established direct administration of the Company. He deprived the poligars of their police and military functions and forced them to destroy all their forts. In consequence they were made mere zamindars. The inhabitants were on pain of death forced to surrender their fire arms, with no compensation being made and prevented from manufacturing deadly weapons. By these radical measures, the English abolished the poligari system in 1799. After prolonged existence it faced a violent end.[40]

40. Madras Council, *Ibid.*, 9 November 1800, Vol. 99, pp. 2941-2949.

COMPANY'S ACQUISITION OF TAMIL NADU

The English East India Company established their direct administration over the Tamil Country in consequence of a gradual yet steady growth of its influence. This was achieved through wars, alliances and diplomacy. As a result of the settlements made with the Nayaks, Bijapur, Golkonda and the Marathas, they established trading settlements. Supported by the ruler of the Carnatic and Thanjavur, they asserted their supremacy over the rival Europeans Free from the threat presented by the French, they turned against the local powers and reduced them into insignificance. In 1767 they acquired possession of the jaghir of Chengalpattu from Nawab Mohammad Ali of Arcot in return for the services rendered to him against Chanda Sahib, Nanja Rajah and the French. In 1792 and 1799 the British forces defeated Tipu Sultan of Mysore and acquired the western region of Tamil Nadu. In 1799 the English imposed a treaty upon the Marathas of Thanjavur and forced them to part with their kingdom on the delta of the Kaveri. In 1801 they obtained the direct possession of the rest of the Tamil Country through the settlement of the Treaty of the Carnatic, made with a nawab created for this purpose.

Annexation of Kongu Nadu

Kongu Nadu, the region comprising Salem, Dharmapuri, Coimbatore, Satyamangalam and most of Dindigul, formed part of the Nayak Kingdom of Madurai but had been annexed by the Wodayars of Mysore. After the fall of the Wodayars, these territories together with Mysore passed under the rule of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. Mysore and the English fought against each other four major wars. During the First War (1767-1769), the Company's forces ravaged parts of Kongu Nadu but failed to occupy it. As the Second War broke out in 1780 the British forces moved into this territory. They captured Coimbatore, Karur and Dharapuram but restored them to the possession of

Mysore in 1784, when the Treaty of Mangalore was signed. In 1782 when this war was in progress Haidar Ali passed away and Tipu Sultan succeeded him to the throne.

The invasion of Travancore, an ally of the Company, by the forces of Mysore led to the outbreak of the Third Mysore War. (1790-1792). Lord Cornwallis, the Governor General, formed an alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam and embarked on military operations against Mysore. Kongu Nadu served as the principal theatre of conflict. General Medows, advancing from Tiruchirapalli, reduced Karur and Coimbatore to submission. Colonel Stuart besieged Dindigul and forced the garrison to surrender. But in September 1790 Tipu at the command of 40,000 troops drove the British forces from their advanced positions including Erode and moved swiftly through Toppur into the Carnatic. Lord Cornwallis, as a counter-move, led an expedition to Srirangapatnam. As his capital was threatened and the fall of the fort appeared certain, the Sultan sued for peace. By the Treaty of Srirangapatnam signed in 1792 Tipu surrendered half of his territory. Together with Malabar, the English obtained possession of the Tamil districts of Dindigul, Salem and Baramahal.

In 1798-99 the English fought the Fourth War against Mysore. The cause of the hostile attitude of Tipu Sultan as well as of the English, Governor General Wellesley declared that the Sultan sought the alliance of the French and refused to accept the protection of the British. On these grounds he went to war against Mysore with the support of the Nizam. Three armies, advancing from Vellore, Malabar and Hyderabad, entered Mysore and besieged Srirangapatnam. Tipu died fighting while his children were taken as prisoners to Vellore. A detachment led by Colonel Brown occupied Tipu's forts in Tamil Nadu-Karur, Erode and Avarakurichi. By a settlement made with its ally the Nizam, the Company acquired possession of a vast territory including the territories held by Mysore in the Tamil Country-Karur, Erode, Dharapuram and Coimbatore. As a result of the Third and Fourth Mysore Wars

the entire Kongu Nadu passed under the control of the English.[1]

Annexation of Thanjavur

The Company exercised an overwhelming influence in Thanjavur since the restoration of the Kingdom from the Wallajahs to the Marathas through its intervention in 1776. On the death of Rajah Tulaji in 1787 his adopted son, Sarafoji succeeded to the throne. The Madras Council, however, set aside the succession and elevated to the throne Amar Singh, the half brother of Tulaji. By a treaty imposed upon the new ruler, the Company reduced Thanjavur to a protectorate. As a next step it aimed at the annexation of the kingdom.

To create a situation favourable for the attainment of this move, the Madras Council in 1792 removed Sarafoji from Thanjavur to Madras. For fear that he would be set as a rival to him, Amar Singh appealed to the Marathas for intervention but they were of no help to him.[2] In March 1796 Governor Hobart directed Resident Macleod to examine the rights of Sarafoji to the throne: Strangely, the seven pandits who declared earlier that the adoption was illegal, now asserted that it was legal.[3] In fact much of the legality of adoption depended upon the shifting emphasis on the relative aspects of the flexible rules furnished by the *Sastras*. Hence the Company found it possible to take political or judicial decision as the circumstances warranted. In October 1798 the Madras Council won the approval of the Court of Directors for the restoration of Sarafoji to the throne and it was immediately carried into effect.[4] This terminated the chequered reign of Amar Singh, contravening there

1. Madras Council, Military Consultations, Treaty of Mysore, Vol. 7, pp. 486-510.
2. Indian Historical Records Commission, Proceedings for 1954, Vol. 30, Part 2, p. 48.
3. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 1 July 1769, Vol. 208, pp. 2719-2770.
4. Madras Council, Political Despatches to England, 15 October, 1798.

by the view of the Madras Council conveyed to the Court of Directors in 1791, when it made a separate provision for the support of Sarafoji that "he (Amar Singh) could not, if left to the genuine dictates of his own mind, possibly imagine that we had the smallest design in favour of Sarfoji or his relations, that could be inconsistent with our Duty to the Company or with those Engagements that had his excellency on the *musnud* (throne) that our anxiety to secure the family of the late Rajah against the feelings of want could not with any justice be construed into a design of creating rivalship".[5]

The advent of Sarafoji to kingship as well as exit from power contributed substantially to the consolidation of British influence in Thanjavur. His engagements with the Company did not permit him to do any real benefit to his country, yet he attempted certain reforms. Thus he granted an increase of the ryots' share of the produce, suspended the collection of duties on grain exported for the relief of the people affected by famine,[6] set up a court at the instructions of the Madras Council and introduced individual settlement in the place of the village settlement.[7] He encountered difficulties because of the rising influence of the *puttackdars* or renters, inadequate finances, disloyalty of the troops who were enlisted by Amar Singh[8], and the outbreak of the Fourth Mysore War. In 1799 upon the declaration of war on Mysore the Rajah was required to furnish provisions and carriage bullocks in support of military operations. The huge demands made by the Company created famine conditions, still the young ruler complied with the demands.[9]

In the elevation of Sarafoji to the throne, the Madras

5 Madras Council, Letter to Court of Directors, *Ibid*., 14 July, 1791.
6. Revenue Consultations, 24 October, 1794, Vol. 58, pp. 2040-2052.
7. Report of the Tanjore Commissioners, 1799, paras 12-13.
8. Military Consultations, 21 December 1798, Vol. 246, pp. 8055-8064.
9. *Ibid*., 6 August 1799, Vol. 256, p. 4782.

Council poised a move for taking possession of the kingdom. However, as no reasonable excuse could be found, the Bengal Council instructed Fort St. George to assume the administration, if Sarafoji himself conveyed such a desire. Paradoxically within a few days Sarafoji requested Fort St. George to take over the administration of his state for a period of not more than two years as he was inexperienced in the transaction of public business. Now no impediment remained, still the Company hesitated, for it contemplated upon an alliance with the Marathas for its war against Mysore in 1798. Lord Wellesley felt that the assumption of the kingdom would not be palatable to the Maratha powers. Yet the Madras Council appointed a commission nominally to assist the prince,[10] but really to carry out a minute investigation into the economic and administrative matters of the state in preparation for the assumption of authority.[11]

In 1799 soon after the successful conclusion of the Mysore War and the completion of the investigation, Governor Edward Clive (1798-1803) at the instructions of Lord Wellesley directed Resident Torin to take prompt steps for annexation. Accordingly, Torin explained to Sarafoji of a new settlement which the Company had in view fort he 'rectification of the defects in the existing administration'. The prince, taken by surprise, expressed his confidence in his ability to improve the administration, but the Resident declared that the more the Rajah understood the novelty of the scheme the more readily he would concur. The helpless prince, convinced of the futility of any opposition, requested for some time before he could convey his decision. A few days later, he summoned the Resident to his palace and gave his acquiscence, remarking that the proposal of the English originated from a motive for the promotion of his and his people's prosperity. In fact Sarafoji, saw the writing on the wall and compro-

10. Political Despatches to England, 15 October 1798, Vol. 4, p. 200.
11. Baliga B. S., *Tanjore District Hand Book*, Madras, 1957, pp. 82-83.

mised with a situation over which he had no control.

The settlement providing for British annexation of Thanjavur was given a strange title as the "Treaty for cementing the friendship and alliance between the Company and the Rajah of Tanjore and for establishing the Government of Tahjore on a permanent Foundation". It was dated 25th October, 1799. The introduction to the treaty stated that a new settlement was found essential as the Treaty of 1792 was inadequate to the intentions of both parties for the better management of the country and for securing to the Company a regular discharge of their existing and future demands on the state. The Treaty provided for the establishment of a judiciary under the sole authority of the Company for the administration of civil and criminal justice and deprived the Rajah of his right to interfere with the revenue administration of the territory. However, the Rajah would receive from the Company every year one lakh of star *pagodas* and a proportion of 1/5th to be calculated on the remainder of the revenue after deducting all charges of collection. The Treaty left the Fort of Thanjavur in possession of the Rajah but authorised the Company to use it as a military post if it was needed during a war fought in the Carnatic. It also guaranteed his right to receive the annual *peishcush* of 2000 *chakrams* from the Danish settlement of Tranquebar.[12] After the conclusion of the Treaty, the Madras Council recovered sixty four villages mortgaged to the Danes. By an agreement with Anker, the Governor of Tranquebar, the Company cleared a loan of 1,26,102 *pagodas* raised by Amar Singh and redeemed the villages from Danish possession.[13]

The methods employed for assertion of British power over Thanjavur were marked by pressure tactics; still the Madras Council claimed that the treaty was executed "not

12. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 25 October 1799, Vol. 259, pp. 6736-6796.
13. Madras Council, Political Despatches to England, 9 October 1800, Vol. 5, pp. 409-412.

only with the full consent, but with the zealous co-operation of the Rajah for the permanent benefit of his people".[14] As a matter of diplomatic dexterity the Treaty strictly avoided the use of the word 'annexation', but achieved its objective by a projection of the principle adopted in previous settlements, namely the restriction of the Rajah's rights and extension of the limits of British sphere. The assumption of administration by the Company replaced the dual system in Thanjavur, but still it did not wipe out the latter completely, for the Rajah retained control of the Fort of Thanjavur and the right to inspect the revenue account and to receive a share of the public income. Nevertheless the English acquired possession of a fertile territory of 4,000 square miles and expanded their empire.

Annexation of the Carnatic

The rising power of the English East India Company and the waning authority of the Nawab of Arcot created a situation favourable for the establishment of British influence in the Carnatic. The wars that Nawab Mohammad Ali conducted with the aid of the Company against Chanda Sahib, the French, the poligars, the rebels of Madurai, the rulers of Thanjavur, Vellore and Mysore contributed to his financial embarrassment and erosion of his authority. The treaties of 1787 and 1792 accorded recognition to the supremacy of the English in the Carnatic. Nawab Umdut-ul-Umara, who succeeded his father Mohammad Ali in 1795, strove hard to reassert his sovereignty but[15] found his task insurmountable.

In 1796 Lord Wellesley, the Governor General, sugges-

14. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 5 November 1799; Vol. 259, p. 6745 Edward Clive's Minute.
Sarafoji died in 1832 and was succeeded by Sivaji. The next ruler was Sarafoji II, who died without leaving a male heir in 1855. In consequence Lord Dalhousie abolished the rajahship.

15. The Treaty of 1792 required the Nawab to contribute every year thirty one and a half lakhs of rupees for the suppport of British military establishment and empowered the English to assume the administration of revenue in the event of war in South India.

ted a modification of the Treaty of 1792.[15] But the Nawab guided by the advice of his father, refused his consent. Mohammad Ali just before his death suggested to Umdut-ul-Umara thus : "Don't forget one word of mine – that is do not make the deviation of a hair's breadth in the late Treaty (of 1792) which is the remover of all evils. If anyone should tell you that he will alter the Treaty for your good, do not agree to it".[16] Upon the refusal of the Nawab to give his consent to a modification of the treaty, Lord Wellesley wanted to resort to some other procedure aimed at the assumption of administration, but he feared that it would be revoked by the authorities of the Company. Thereupon he instructed Edward Lord Clive, the Governor of Madras, "It is very necessary that we should be prepared to decide the eventual question of the succession to the Nawabship in the probable event of His Highness's early death. Your Lordship will have goodness to ascertain the respective pretentions of those who might lay claim to the Musnud in such an event. Upon such information as I shall receive from you, we may be enabled to anticipate the mischiefs of a disputed succession and to avoid the disgrace of adopting a premature decision, which we might be compelled to revoke".[17] According to this suggestion, the Madras Council should have observed restraint until the anticipated early death of Umdut-ul-Umara, but it did not.

In 1798 the Governor directed the Nawab to pay certain unsettled debts, which in his estimate amounted to 11,62,770 *pagodas*. Making this demand, when the mobilisation of forces against Mysore was in progress, Lord Clive pointed out that by liquidating the debt at the moment, the Nawab could advance his own interests.[18] But it was clear that Umdut-ul-Umara stood no chance to gain anything substantial by a British victory over Tipu Sultan. Besides, an examination of

16. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, Vol. 46, pp. 188-206.
17. *Marquess Wellesley's Despatches*, Vol, 2, pp. 226-228.
18. Military Country Correspondence, Madras, 19 August 1798, Vol. 42, p. 302.

the financial transaction of the Company with the Nawab established that the claim was untenable. The English stepped into the assistance of the Wallajah during the Second Carnatic War (1749-1754). The subsequent wars fought against the powers kept up the increase of the debts of the Carnatic. Though the English gained all benefits of war, the Nawab repaid part of the accumulated debt either by sharing the revenue of his provinces with the Company or by cash payments. Ultimately in 1792 when a treaty was settled, the Nawab granted the *peishcush* of Thanjavur in lieu of the clearance of all outstanding claims. The Treaty of 1792 mentioned nothing about any unsettled debt and since then there was no occasion for the Nawab to incur fresh debts, for the English fought no war on his behalf and if they suppressed the poligars, it was at their own expense, as stipulated by the Treaty of 1792. In fact the Company was not justified in forwarding fresh claims upon the Nawab under the guise of unsettled debts.

On the otherhand Umdut-ul-Umara complained that though his circar shared the expenses of the wars, waged against the French and the South Indian powers, the Company refused him any share of the benefits, but imposed upon him only the burdens. The Nawab rightly asserted: "My situation with my friends, the English Company, is as if we were both embarked on the same ship if which God avert, the ship should founder we would both sink with her, and if she arrives at her desired port after having captured a ship of the enemy, my friends are to reap the benefits and advantages thereof and I am to look on as an hungry disappointed spectator." Proceeding further, the Nawab claimed that if all the accounts were properly settled, there would be a balance of eighty lakhs of *pagodas* in his favour. In support of this claim Umdut-ul-Umara pointed out that the Company retained for itself the revenue from Ramanathapuram, Sadras and the pearl fisheries of Tutukudi.[19] Though he was entitled to receive this revenue the Madras Coucil paid no heed to his demand.

19. *Ibid*., Vol. 49, pp. 309

The Company, as a next step, decided to take advantage of the situation created by the outbreak of the Fourth Mysore War in 1799. The third article of the Treaty of 1792 stipulated that in the event of a war breaking out in the Carnatic and the countries appertaining to either party, the Nawab or the Company and dependent on the Carnatic or contiguous thereto the Company should possess full authority over the Carnatic except the jagirs and the charities, In that case the Nawab was entitled to receive one fifth of the revenues during the war and to get the country restored to his administration at the end of war. This provision empowered the English to assume the administration of the Carnatic, but Lord Wellesley doubted the utility of such a course of action, as the war offered no prospect of prolonged operation. Determined to realise his objective through another device, he suggested to the Nawab to agree to a compromise by which the latter could retain possession of North Arcot and cede the rest of his country on a permanent basis in lieu of his payments to the Company.[20] As an incentive the Governor General offered to recognise the Nawab's claims over the revenue of Ramanathapuram, Sadras and the pearl fisheries.[21] This offer served only to reveal the justifiability of the Nawab's claims, but failed to achieve its object. Fortunately for Umdut-ul-Umara the war ended within two months of its commencement and the Company lost its ground for maintaining the pressure.[22]

The failure of these subtle devices led the English to other methods. The Treaty of 1792 authorised the Company to assume the administration of the mortgaged provinces on default of payments by the Nawab. The servants of the Company, now sought to embarrass the Nawab's administration so as to cause default in its payments. They restricted the sale of grain, the chief source of public income, prohibited the in-

20. Madras Council, Secret Consultations, 23 July 1799, Vol. 8, pp. 1244-1245.

21 *Ibid*., 24 April 1799, Vol. 8, pp. 1213-1233.

22. Marquess Wellesley's Dospatches, Vol. II, p 198.

habitants from having any dealing with the circar, invited them to prefer complaints against the amuldars, objected to their paying taxes to the circar, turned out public servants from offices and even evolved a parallel administration.[23] These proceedings naturally discredited the Nawab before his subjects. In consequence he found it extremely difficult to collect taxes and pay the Company. Insulted and disgraced, Umdut-ul-Umara wrote to Lord Clive: "The afraightened deer flies at the approach of danger and finds shelter in the recess of impenitrable forests but for me there is no retreat. Against an enemy, I might have defended myself or avoided his snares, but it is the arm of friendship which is raised against me, that draws the hostile arrow of destruction . . . Crushed are all my hopes and prospect of happiness vanishes from my sight, the rose has fallen and the stalk with all its thorns alone remains in my hand ... O My Lord, I complain! I complain!! I complain!!![24] Thus the sovereign of the Carnatic found himself in an unenviable position. Still he did not allow his distress to prevent him from complying with the obligations, imposed by the Treaty. Exploiting all the resources at his command and raising loans from different sources, he made the payments punctually. In consequence all the endeavours of the Company to discover one pretext or other for assuming the administration proved futile. In the absence of any plausible ground the Madras Council contemplated upon a scheme of annexation on the plea that the Nawab granted *tuncaws* or assignments in revenue in mortgaged territories, but hesitated, as the only remedy suggested by the Treaty of 1792 was that such assignments would become null and void, when the Company assumed the administration.

However, to the relief of the British representatives they discovered certain papers at Srirangapatnam after the fall of the Fort in 1799, proving the existence of a correspondence

23. Secret Sundries, 24 June 1800, Vol. 21, pp. 1045-1090.
24. Umdut-ul-Umara, 10 May 1800, Letter to Lord Clive, Military Consultations, Vol. 268, pp. 2996-3027.

between their enemy, Tipu Sultan and their ally, the Nawab. As James Mill has remarked very pointedly: "When the Governor General and all his superiors and all subordinates to the Government of India were languishing and panting for the possession of the Carnatic, but afraid without some more plausible reason than they yet possessed to commence the seizure, here it was provided for them in extraordinary perfection".[25]

Soon after the Battle of Srirangapatnam in 1799, the English discovered in the palace archives a voluminous correspondence of Mohammad Ali and his son Umdut-ul-Umara with Tipu Sultan. As it was in Persian, the translation into English was entrusted with N. B. Edmonstone, the Company's Persian translator. In his report the translator alleged that Mohammad Ali maintained a secret correspondence with Tipu Sultan through the medium of Ghulam Ali Khan and Ali Raza Khan, the two deputies of Tipu, that the purpose of the correspondence was to establish a connection with the Sultan detrimental to British interests, that Umdut-ul-Umara was the principal channel of communication between Arcot and Srirangapatnam and that the latter continued the correspondence even after his accession to the throne.[26] Thus Edmonstone mixed up politics with translation. He further asserted that the Nawab in his correspondence used vague expressions like "the writing known of", "the affair known of", "Despicable" and the "New Comers". These terms, used in the correspondence, naturally excited the curiosity as well as suspicion of the English in India. To clarify the doubts and in an attempt at establishing charges against the Nawab, the Madras Council appointed J. Webbe and B. Close as commissioners to examine the persons associated with this correspondence, for what the Company wanted was to use it as an excuse to proceed with the annexation of the territory.

25. James Mill, *The History of British India*, Vol. VI, p. 218.
26. Madras Council, 25 July 1801, Secret Consultations, Vol. 12, pp 377-378.

The commissioners separately interrogated five persons - Ghulam Ali Khan, Al Raza Khan, Dewan Poornea, Ghulam Ali Mir Sadr and Habibullah. The result of the enquiry appeared discouraging, for it indicated that the correspondence was intended to settle a matrimonial alliance and the expressions "the writing known of" and "the affair known of" referred to the proposed marriage".[27] The key to the cypher established that "well - wisher of mankind", designated Mohammad Ali "Nothingness" the Nizam, "Despicable" the Marathas and "New Comers" the English. The commissioners in consequence failed to estab sh any criminal purpose in the correspondence, despite the allegations made by the translator.

Still the Madras Council did not hesitate. Edward Clive, rashly asserted that the Nawab cherished hostile designs. In a bid to prove the validity of his assertion he cited his own reasons: the secret nature of the correspondence with the inveterate enemy of the English, the proposed matrimonial alliance as nothing but an explanation devised for the purpose of satisfying suspicion if the correspondence were discovered, the composition of the cypher, the spirit in which the English and their allies were designated, the known ambition of Mohammad Ali to emancipate himself from British influence, the project of independence cherished by Umdut-ul-Umara, his "determined obstinacy" which prevented the Madras Council from carrying out the reorganisation of his administration, his "repeated violations" of the existing treaties and the "obstacles placed upon the progress of British arms during the Fourth Mysore War". Upon these grounds, he suggested the assumption of the administration of the Carnatic by the Company.[28]

In defence the following facts are to be noted: The oral examination conducted by the commissioners made it clear that Mohammad Ali entered into correspondence at Lord Cornwallis's instruction for cultivating the friendship of the Sultan in an

27. Madras Council, 25 July 1801, *Ibid*., Vol. 12, pp. 470-473.
28. *Ibid*., 33 May 1800, Vol. 10, pp. 553-557.

attempt to preserve peace in South India. The Madras Council made no attempt to ascertain whether Lord Cornwallis had suggested this, but it cannot be denied that it was in consonance with the policy of preserving peace in India and that the correspondence contained nothing but expressions of civility and compliment from a fellow Mussalman. The extracts: "May God long preserve Tipu Sultan who is the Pillar of the Religion of Mohammad, Night and day I used to be absorbed in this contemplation and pray for His Highness's prosperity" in the letter dated 10th June, 1792 and "In consideration of the complexion of the times, the state of which is manifest, and that the support of the Religion of Mohammad in this country entirely depends upon the Sultan, My nightly and daily prayer is offered up for His good. . ." in the letter dated 4th August 1792[29] testify to Mohammad Ali's anxiety for the preservation of fellow Muslim power. Further, the Nawab advised the Sultan of the imprudence of his attachment to the declining cause of the French and warned him that his intrigues at the court of Poona had alarmed the vigilance of Lord Cornwallis'. This was clearly an attempt to dissuade the Sultan from his intrigues with other powers and to avert a clash with the English. However, it is not possible to know the exact motive for using the vague expressions and cyphers. As this did not establish that the Nawab had any hostile design, it must be conceded that he intended to keep the proposed matrimonial alliance as a guarded secret. The benefit of doubt should be given to the defendant, the Nawab. Besides, the correspondence was not direct. The Sultan's deputies, who were stationed at Madras as aids to his sons who were sent as hostages for the fulfilment of the Treaty of Srirangapatnam (1792), reported what they attributed as the views of the Nawab. The authenticity of these second hand reports is open to doubt; for there was an instance, when the deputies fabricated a statement made by Colonel Doveton in a conference, when they reported it to the Sultan. Further there is no evidence to prove that the Nawab had any correspondence with the Sultan after the Company decided on a fourth

29. *Ibid.*, 25 July 1801, Vol. 12, pp. 329-338.

war against Mysore. It is not true that the Nawab obstructed British campaigns against Mysore. On the other hand he donated 16,000 *pagodas*[30] and placed his camels, horses and elephants at the service of the Company, without aspiring for any compensation.[31] In addition it cannot be denied that the Company's representatives in their zeal of levelling one sided charges, ignored the sovereign rights of the Nawab. They were not entitled to ask for the surrender of the country by the Nawab under in the guise of improving administration. If the Nawab violated the treaty, it was within his sovereign right to do so and a violation of the treaty would at the most restore *status quo ante*. Nevertheless, the Company decided to proceed with its venture.

As a preliminary to the execution of the design, Lord Wellesley instructed Lord Clive to open a negotiation with the Nawab and to announce the Company's decision to annex the country. But Umdut-ul-Umara fell seriously ill by this time and Edward Clive postponed the announcement for fear of disturbing the peace of a dying ruler. On 15th July 1801 the Nawab passed away. Before his death he had nominated his son Ali Hussain, a young man of eighteen, as his successor and appointed Mohammad Najib Khan Salar Jang and Tuckia Ali Khan as deputies to the prince. This settled the question of succession.

Soon after the death of Umdut ul Umara, Edward Clive deputed Webbe and Close to finalise a fresh political settlement with the new ruler. The commissioners met the deputies of the Nawab in a conference, informed him of the nature of correspondence, which the Nawabs had with Tipu, and the determination of the Company to assume the administration of the Carnatic. The deputies on their part requested for an opportunity to defend against the charge, but received a strange

30. *Wellesley's Despatches*, Vol. 2, p. 519.

31. Pagoda, a gold coin, was normally exchanged for three rupees and a star pagoda for three and a half rupees.

reply: The British Government, being satisfied of the sufficiency of its proofs, had no intention of constituting itself a judge of the conduct of its ally" [32] Subsequently, the commissioners informed Ali Hussain too of the Company's decision but the latter refused his acquiscence. Suspecting that the deputies exerted their influence upon the prince for the refusal of his consent to the implementation of the Company's decision; Edward Clive held a separate conference with the prince to ascertain his genuine views. The Governor explained to the Nawab in the most serious, but formal manner of the 'violation' of the terms of the prevalent Treaty of 1792, which regulated British relations with Arcot, by his father and the right of the Company to annex the country. Edward Clive warned Ali Hussain that if he refused his consent to effect the change of authority, the result would be disastrous for him. Inspite of this warning, the prince categorically refused his assent.

Now two alternatives engaged the attention of the Madras Council : to annex the territory by proclamation or to do it by regulating the order of succession. As the first choice was considered as a wanton humiliation of the house of Mohammad Ali and as inconsistent with the British sentiments of national policy, the second one gained acceptance. Now the commissioners consulted Azim ul Doula, the son of Amir ul Umara, the second son of Mohammad Ali. Azim ul Doula agreed to give his consent to the desired political settlement in return for the British recognition of his title as the Nawab; for he had nothing to lose but everything to gain. In consequence the Company set aside the hereditary rights of Ali Hussain and recognised in his place Azim ul Doula as the nawab of the Carnatic, but without territory. On the 31st of July, 1801 Azim ul Doula ascended the throne with all pomp and splendour. Within a few days the young Ali Hussain died, but not without the suspicion of being poisoned to death. The new nawab was deprived of power and territory, yet was permitted to retain a

32. Lord Clive, 13 August 1799, Political Despatches to England, Vol. 5, pp. 237-395.

few appendages of sovereignty and to receive one-fifth of the net revenue of the country, but not falling below 1,44,000 star *pagodas* and not exceeding 5,00,000 a year.[33] A new treaty signed by the British and the new nawab provided for the transfer of powers.

The British acquisition of the Carnatic marked the logical culmination of the successful working of aid and alliance, a powerful agency of imperialism. So long as the English found themselves confronted with the rival powers, the French and the Nevayets, the evil effects of it did not appear very pronounced. But when these enemies had been eliminated from the political scene of South India, the Nawab found himself saddled in the clutches of imperialism. His continued policy of seeking more aid from the English for the suppression of the poligars and rebels not only added to his predicament but deprived him of the possibility of building up his own war machine. After the annexation of Thanjavur in 1773, Mohammad Ali made an attempt towards this direction, but it was too late, for by then the British forces garrisoned all strategic forts and he diverted the bulk of his resources for their support. There developed a situation in which the Nawab could neither extricate himself from the grip of his powerful ally nor could he re-assert his sovereignty with the aid of any other power. This rendered the transfer of power inevitable. With the acquisition of Kongu Nadu from Mysore, Thanjavur from the Marathas and the Carnatic from the Wallajahs, the English gained possession of the entire Tamil Country.

33. Madras Council, Political Despatches to England, 17 February 1802, Vol. 6, pp 39-41.

Chapter XVIII

SOUTH INDIAN REBELLION IN TAMIL NADU

The South Indian Rebellion of 1800-1801 represented a violent reaction against the surrender of the rulers to the British. As the result of diplomacy and wars, the aliens established their sway over the land. The horrors that attended the growth of imperialism spread a wave of revulsion and led the inhabitants to united action. The outbreak of the Rebellion marked the climax of a determined endeavour, made by the common people of South India to liberate the 'Peninsula of Jambu Dwipa' from British yoke and to forestall the fall of rest of India under European authority, so that all the inhabitants of the land, as the rebels declared, could live "in constant happiness without tears".[1] Marudu Pandyan of Sivaganga, Gopala Nayak of Dindigul, Khan-i-Jah Khan of Coimbatore, Kerala Varma of Malabar, Krishnappa Nayak of Mysore and Dhondaji Waug of Maharashtra, who organised a formidable confederacy for the overthrow of the British rule, spearheaded the movement. They held a conspiracy at Virupakshi in Dindigul and rose in arms with an attack on Coimbatore on the 3rd of June, 1800. The insurrection spread over an extensive region from Sholapur in the North and to Nanguneri in the far South. In this great struggle the Tamils played the most remarkable role.

Causes of the Rebellion

The proclamations and letters of the rebels furnish clues to the causes of the movement. Their grievances were that the English reduced the hereditary rulers to the humiliating status of "widow", treated the sons of the soil like 'dogs', showed no consideration for the customs of the land, denied the peasants due share of the crops, and made the

1. Proclamation of Marudu, Revenue Sundries, Vol. 26, p. 448.

rice *vellum* or water.[2] Thus the causes of the Rebellion were political, social and economic. These assertions are substantially corroborated by the official correspondence entered in the records of Fort St. George.

The obliteration of the royal institutions represented the logical outcome of the steady ascendancy of the English in South India. The Company deprived the rulers of the Carnatic and Thanjavur of their political rights. In 1795 they deposed the Setupati of Ramanathapuram, but failed to win the allegiance of the inhabitants. They made deep inroads into the liberties of the poligars too. The Company not only waged a series of wars against these traditional chieftains for default of payments or defiance to its authority, but overthrew them from power and at times executed them. Thus the Madras Council deposed Combia Nayak of Sapatore, for his failure to pay tribute. The chief turned a rebel, was caught and executed.[3] Poojari Nayak of Deodanappatty met with the same fate.[4] In 1799 Kattabomman and other poligars were suppressed. This was followed by the abolition of the poligari system. Further, the replacement of one branch of the ruling house of a palayam by another was made an accepted practice. This policy excited mutual jealousies and created an animosity against the English.[5]

The people had a grievance that they were ill treated. In fact the chieftains were required to supply provisions to the forces, give presents to the officials and to attend on the revenue servants.[6] Among the common people, it was a

2. Madras Council, Military Consultations, Vol. 284, p 4296. Copy of a letter sent by a rebel.
3. Madras Council, 11 October 1798, Revenue Consultations, Vol. 88, pp. 3179-3181.
4. Madras Council, 6 May 1800, Military Consultations, Vol. 268, pp. 2681-2683 and 2691.
5. *Ibid.*, 21 August 1792, Vol. 165, pp 3825.
6. *Tinnevelly District Gazatteer*, p. 71

pestilential traffic called *country business* that held the English in ridicule. The European adventurers who obtained assignments on revenue, employed bands of badge-peons as the feudal barons did, under the pretext of protecting the money chest. The well-known badge exacted and enforced the most implicit obedience. When the season of collection arrived, these peons sallied forth to levy, to scourge and to oppress the unfortunate peasants.[7] They forcibly seized any who proved dilatory in payment, placed him in strict confinement under the guard allotted to protect the treasure and inflicted upon the miserable victim "all the odious and unmanly punishment and tortures, that unrestrained malignity and avarice can invent".[8] These unprincipled individuals advanced loans to renters on high rates of interest and assisted them in oppressing the peasantry. The loans which they advanced made the renters independent of the immediate produce and helped them to weary the ryots in their resistance to extortions.[9] In times of famine the assignees formed monopolistic combinations and rendered the prices of articles intolerably high.[10] Thus, they tyrannised the inhabitants and flourished on the exorted wealth and the spoils of artificial famine. As the American colonists raised the slogan "no taxation without representation", the Tamlis declared: the cloud rains, the land yields, why should we pay tax to the aliens?

Opressive administration and natural calamities intensified the economic suffering of the inhabitants. After the assumption of power the English greatly increased the rates of assessment. Bribery and corruption crept into every department of revenue administration. The Company's renters like the Nawab's amuldars observed no maxim in the exaction of money and

7. Madras Council, 7 February 1800, Secret Consultations, Vol. 10, pp. 177-183
8. Macaulay, Letter to Madras Council, *Ibid.*, 27 January 1800, Vol. 10, p. 182
9. *Ibid.*, 11 April 1800. Vol. 10, pp. 108-110.
10. *Ibid.*, 31 October 1800, Vol. 11, pp. 756-758.

grain. They took away the entire grain on which the ryots had to subsist for the whole year and stripped them of all their property, plough and even utensils. Not unfrequently, extortion and violence forced the inhabitants to desert their homes.[11] These oppressive practices together with the shameless speculations, which overspread the country, had obliterated the expectations of the inhabitants to seek justice from the English.[12]

In 1798-99 monsoon failed. The southern provinces put on the dreary appearance of an excessive drought and the desolation was "too melancholy to the eye, not to convince the mind".[13] Despite the starvation and mass exodus, the evil forces combined together against the inhabitants. The renters and the assignees increased the prices by common agreement.[14] Extortion and plunder made the adventure of merchants unenterprising. The stagnation of commercial traffic due to the withdrawal of carriage bullocks, to be employed with the forces sent against Mysore, prevented the importation of grain from other territories by land.[15] The English at Ramanathapuram, on the other hand, imposed an arbitrary embargo on the importation of grain through the sea in their attempt to provide every artificial attraction to the grain, kept in their store houses. In consequence the price of grain shot high and the famine stricken inhabitants found it impossible to obtain any relief. When the Madras Council heard about it, it lifted the embargo,[16] but it was late.

The French made their own contribution to the outbreak.

11. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 14 December 1798. Vol. 91, pp. 4440-4441.
12. *Ibid.*, 23 July 1802, Vol. 118, pp. 2360-2361.
13. *Ibid*, 14 December 1802, Harris, Letter to Board of Revenue, Vol. 91, p. 4396.
14. Madras Council, Secret Consultations, 31 October 1800, Vol. 11, p. 756.
15. Do. Military Consultations, 6 August 1799, Vol. 256, p. 4781
16. Do. Revenue Despatches to England, 15 October 1798, Vol. 6, pp 300-324

The French Directory sent its emissaries to the southern provinces for disseminating revolutionary principles and kindling nationalist risings as part of its global struggle against the English.[17] Tipu Sultan who became a convert to the ideal of the French Revolution promised assistance to the rebels. The French endeavours had their impact upon the discontented inhabitants and contributed to the coordination of rebel strategy.[18]

The long chain of political evils and the accumulated horrors of a dilapidated economy together with the spirit of independence fostered unrest in volume and intensity. The insurgents decided to liberate the land from the British domination and to restore the old royal institutions to their former glory. By achieving this noble task, they expected to find the means to live in "constant happiness without tears".[19] They declared that "If now the people in the different countries would rise up and resist they (the Europeans) will sink and perish. As the people of the different countries are submissive, they desire them to do whatever they like".[20] The leaders of the rebellion placed their reliance upon force and united action for the attainment of their objective. Accordingly, they sent three missions to the Marathas and won the support of Dhoondaji Waug of Shimoga. The emissaries visited the other rebels too, particularly in Canara, Arisikarai and Malabar. As a result of wide spread activity, the deputies of the rebel chiefs held a conspiracy at Virupakshi near Palni under the leadership of Gopala Nayak on 29 April, 1800. It was decided to begin the war with the capture of Coimbatore. The confederates in the far South were to rise in arms with the appearance of the

17. Madras Council, Political Despatches to England, 13 August 1711, Vol. 5, p. 308.
18. Madras Council, 22 December 1801, Political Consultations, Vol. 5, p. 1638
19. Revenue Sundries, Vol. 16, pp. 447-455.
20. Madras Council, Military Consultations, 9 June 1801, Vol. 254, p. 114.

'horse', which meant the cavalry of Dhoondaji Waug. Marudu Pandyan in the mean time issued two proclamations, one at Tiruchirapalli and another at Srirangam, summoning all the inhabitants, irrespective of any communal or religious consideration, to rally to the standard of rebellion.

Military Operations

As decided at the conspiracy at Virupakshi, the rebels assembled in strength on the Satyamangalam Ranges and Palni Hills in preparation for the capture of Coimbatore. On 31 April 1800 five columns of rebels moved on Coimbatore, but the enemy received secret information and thwarted the realisation of the rebel move. The forces, that were sent in search, apprehended several of the rebel parties and seized much of the rebel correspondence. This led to the trial and execution of Appaji Gour, who led the Tamil missions to the Marathas, and forty one other conspirators at Coimbatore, Satyamangalam and other centres of disaffection. The parties that escaped apprehension, thereupon, retreated to the hills, waiting for further opportunity. In the mean time the British forces took effective measures to suppress the rebels of Kannada and Maratha territories. Colonel Arthur Wellesley in command of the forces led a series of expeditions against Dhoondaji Waug. As the result of extensive operations, the forces occupied the territories from the rebels. Yet the rebel cavalry moved in strength to Savanore in the south for an expedition through Mysore in support of the patriots of Coimbatore, but it was checked. Sustaining a series of reverses, Dondaji Waug retreated to Konagal in September, 1800 but was defeated and killed. The rebels of Canara, Arisikarai and Malabar too were driven to the defensive.

As the expected 'horse' did not appear at Coimbatore, the disappointed rebels of Tamil Nadu turned their attention to the far South. Early in February, 1801 the patriots disguised as pilgrims going to Tiruchendur, secured the release of the rebel leaders imprisoned in the Fort of Palayamkottai. Immediately, 30,000 insurgents of Madurai and Ramanathapuram sent by Marudu

Pandyan, joined their comrades in Tirunelveli.[21] Large groups of Maravas, Nadars, Paravas and Totiens voluntarily joined the insurrection. The Paravas of the coast supplied wall pieces, powder and guns to the fighting men.[22] Pillaging parties led by Oomathurai, the deaf and dumb leader, surprised and subdued British military posts[23] and by the end of February occupied all the territories extending from Panjalamkurichi to Srivaikuntam and Alwar Tirunagari.[24] In March they advanced to Tutukudi, upon which the garrison consisting of the local sepoys voluntarily surrendered the fort. After this victory, the rebels embarked upon an offensive to Ramanathapuram.[25]

Colin Macaulay, the Company's commanding officer at Tirunelveli, issued a proclamation warning the people of exemplary punishment if they were found in arms or rendering aid to the rebels.[26] Mobilising the entire disposable force of the district, he marched to Kadayanallur, six miles short of Panjalamkurichi. To their astonishment they found the fort, that was demolished in 1799, raised as it were by magic in six days and well manned by thousands of armed men. The patriots foiled an attempt to capture the Pagoda of Ottapidaram and boldly appeared on the rear and flank of the enemy. Macaulay for fear that his column would be cut off ordered a humiliating retreat to Palayamkottai.[27]

While the rebels were gaining victories in various quarters, fresh troops of the Company poured into the far South. A formidable phalanx attacked the British camp at Pasuvantanai, but after losing ninety six armed men, made

21. Madras Council, 9 June 1804, Military Consultations, Vol. 284, p. 4295.
22. *Ibid.*, 10 February & March 1801, Vol. 279, p. 279.
23. *Ibid.*, 23 February 1801, Vol. 279, p. 988.
24. *Ibid.*, 10 February & 15 March 1811, Vol 299 p. 728.
25. *Ibid.*, 11 March 1801 & 13 April 1802, Vol. 280, pp. 1469-1472.
26. *Ibid.*, 10 March 1801, Vol. 280, pp. 1483-1485.
27. *Ibid.*, 17 February 1801, Vol. 279, pp. 886-893.

its retreat.[28] On the 31st of March the British forces, led by Macaulay, launched an attack on Panjalamkurichi. With intrepid firmness the insurgents engaged the assailants in a fierce encounter. All the British troops who pressed their way to the walls were piked or shot dead. Successive attempts made to surmount the resistance, ended in failure.[29] Greatly concerned at this humiliation, the enemy assembled a grand army at Koilpatti and directed Adjudant General Agnew to take the command of the operations. On the 24th a practicable breach on the walls of Panjalamkurichi having been effected, hostile columns supported by field pieces, advanced in strength. In the arduous contest that ensued, both parties suffered equally heavy losses. The insurgents continued their heroic resistance until all, who gathered in the breach, were shot dead by the enemy. The British troops emerged triumphant. Shortly after this decisive hour, the rebels numbering about 3,000 assembled on the eastern face of the fort, rushed rapidly in eastern and northern directions, formed into two columns and retreated, 'beset but not dismayed'. They left 1050 of their compatriots dead. Agnew executed the imprisoned rebels near the fallen citadel. After this discomfiture, the insurgents evacuated all their strongholds in Tirunelveli; most of them fled to the north, while the rest escaped to the hills of the West.[30]

In May 1801 the Rebellion spread to the northern provinces. Uniting themselves with every disaffected chief and drawing together all the inhabitants of their districts, Marudu Pandyan and his allies assembled a powerful force. They proclaimed Muthu Karuppa Tevar as the rebel ruler of Ramanathapuram[31] and reduced the forts of Tirupatore, Natham, Melur

28. J. Welsh, *Military Reminiscences*, Vol. I, London, 1830, p. 61.
29. Madras Council, 2 May 1801, Secret Despatches to England, Vol. 2, p. 81.
30. Madras Council, 9 June 1801, Military Consultations, Vol. 284, pp. 4040-4041.
31. *Ibid.*, 1 December 1801, Vol. 289, p. 7680.

and Tirumelur to submission.[32] Led by the chiefs, Melappan and Puttur, the insurgents established their sway over the Marava territory.[33] In control of a long coast-line they employed large boats to bring supplies of grain, arms and ammunition from Lanka and other territories through the port of Tondi.[34] In July Oomathurai commanded his followers to Palayanad near Madurai and captured it. The Kallar tribes occupied the western part of Madurai district. In June 1801 the insurrection spread to the Kaveri basin. The armed columns of Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram under the command of Shevatta Tambi, son of Marudu Pandyan, marched to Thanjavur.[35] With the peasants voluntarily rallying to rebel ranks, they occupied Pattukkottai and established their posts at Arandangy and Adiarkudi.[36] They remained in force in the territory till the British operations from other quarters drove them to the defensive.

All the rebels made a common cause against the English. Their unity of purpose rendered their resistance determined. Aimed at the harassment of the enemy, the insurgents cut off communications, destroyed forts, took shelter in thick jungles and depended on guerilla tactics. By their rapid and irregular movements they laid waste the entire country, but eluded the pursuit of regular troops with ease. The British forces could neither obtain provisions nor establish their posts in security. In consequence they found themselves constantly exposed to the assault by the rebels.[37]

In a bid to overcome these odds the English gained the support of the princes, particularly the Tondaiman of Pudukkottai and the Rajah of Thanjavur and brought reinforcements

32. *Ibid.*, 1 June, 1801, Vol. 284, p. 3870.
33. *Ibid.*, 7 July 1801, Vol. 285, pp. 5047-5048.
34. *Ibid.*, 21 June 1801, Vol. 285, p. 4603.
35. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1801, Vol. 286, pp. 5352-5353.
36. *Ibid.*, 11 August 1801, Vol. 286, p. 5645.
37. *Ibid.*, 2 June 1801, Vol. 284, pp. 4340-4341.

from Bengal and Malaya. They resumed operations on a large scale in May, 1801. Agnew as a result of his success in capturing a number of rebel strongholds checked the rising tempo of rebellion in Ramanathapuram and relieved Madurai from threat of assault. A force under the command of Major James Graham marched from Tiruppuvanam to Madurai. The rebels in considerable strength attacked Graham, but a detachment under Major Sheppard reached to his rescue.[38] On the 11th of June the forces of Agnew marching through Manamadurai and Partibanur, reoccupied Paramagudi. The armed bodies hovered round the English troops throughout their march. They cut a party to pieces at Tirupachetty and pressed vigorously on British lines, but withdrew after a clash in which seventy of them died. Near Manamadurai columns of rebels lined behind high banks, water courses and jungles on the opposite bank of river Palamaneri. They made a dash across the river and charged the British troops with pikes. In the clashes that followed both sides suffered considerable loss. Still the army continued its march and arrived at Ramanathapuram on the 14th of June.[39]

Leaving Ramanathapuram, Agnew reached Madurai on the 9th of July. He stormed the rebel stronghold at Tirupatore on the 24th and waited for the arrival of a detachment, led by Colonel Innes from Malabar.[40] After suppressing the rebels of Dindigul, Innes advanced towards Madurai. Reinforced, he attacked Piranmalai but was defeated. Retreating to Natham, he marched to Manapacherry on the 4th of July. But the columns led by the Marudu Brothers pressed vigorously on his lines, again forcing his retreat to Natham. Subsequently taking the route through Piranmalai, Innes on the 25th arrived at Satturusamharakkottai. The next day while he was marching to Tirupatore through a thick wood, the rebels

38. *Ibid.*, 9 June 1801, Vol. 184, pp. 4280-4281.

39. *Ibid.*, 21 June 1801, Vol. 285, pp. 4550-4555 and 4603-4604.

40. *Ibid*, 4 August 1801, Vol. 286, p. 5367.

again attacked him using rockets, but was rescued by Agnew[41]. The combined forces of Agnew and Innes now reduced Okkur

Marudu Pandyan, the great patriot
(picture from a statue at Kalayarkoil)

and attacked Siruvayal, the headquarters of the rebels of Sivaganga. After a futile resistance, the insurgents retired to the jungles.[42] Marching from Siruvayal, the British forces began operations against the rebel strongholds in the forests of Kalayarkoil. Driven to desperation, the patriots fought for every inch of land. Though the English succeeded in beating off the crowds every hour, they found themselves completely and constantly surrounded by hordes. As no alternative presented itself, Agnew retreated to Siruvayal and abandoned his project of advancing to Kalayarkoil from that direction.[43]

However the enemy gained more victories in Ramanathapuram and Thanjavur. Captain Blackburne, with the aid of the Rajah of Thanjavur, reoccupied the southern bank of the Kaveri. A detachment commanded by Lieutenant Maclean routed the rebels led by Puttur at Woriur. In September Blackburne expelled the insurgents from Arandangy and desolated the villages of Terboinadu. He proceeded within twenty miles of Siruvayal, thence advancing eastward, detached a strong body to Ramanathapuram. Turning to the north he reached Karaikudi by the beginning of October. About 3000 armed men led by Oomathurai hovered around Maclenan's column but retreated. After establishing a post near Karaikudi Blackburne drove the rebels from the jungles of Singampunari[44] and cut off their communications with the coast. An armed vessel, sent to the Bay of Tondi, destroyed the boats employed by the patriots for the importation of grain and war materials. Mean while Martin won a signal victory over the rebels near the fort of Ramanathapuram and Macaulay routed another body led by Melappan at Abiramum. Lieutenant Miller won a victory near Kamudi.[45] These gains,

41. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1801, Vol. 286, pp. 5348-5349 and 5357-5370.
42. James Welsh, *Military Reminiscences*, Vol. I, pp. 89-92.
43. Madras Council, 20 October 1801, Military Consultations, Vol. 288, pp. 6837-6839.
44. *Ibid.*, 20 October 1801, Vol. 288, pp. 6925-6951.
45. Madras Council 4 September 1801, Revenue Consultations, Vol. 110, pp. 1692-1693.

significant as they were, not only re-established Company's authority over Remanathapuram but bottled up the rebels in the forests of Kalayarkoil.

In September Agnew launched a second offensive towards Kalayarkoil. On the 18th he reduced Piranmalai and taking his route through Melur, Singampunari and Nandikottai, arrived at Okkur. He captured the rebel posts at Vaniamkudi, Collumbum and Muthur in Sivaganga. On the 30th of September three detachments led by Innes, Blackburne and Macaulay made simultaneous thrusts on Kalayarkoil. After a siege and fire on the 1st of October the defiant citadel fell to the enemy. The vanquished, led by Oomathurai and Sevatiah, fled to Dindigul while the rest followed Marudu Pandyan to the jungles of Singampunari.[46]

On the appearance of the patriots the inhabitants of Dindigul again rallied in strength. Within three days more than 4000 armed men joined Oomathurai and Sevatiah. They reoccupied the hills of Virupakshi, descended upon the valley of Dindigul and repulsed an attack by a detachment, commanded by Jones. As despatch seemed essential for curbing the growing influence of the patriots, Innes at the command of a well equipped detachment, rushed to Dindigul. Fighting was resumed on the 12th of October. The rebels headed by Oomathurai sought to intercept the progress of British forces at Virupakshi and subsequently at Chetrampatti, but suffered reverses. Advancing through a thick wood, the English captured Cowdelli and the Corman Delli Barriers.[47] Hard pressed, Oomathurai led his armed group to the valley of Dindigul. The enemy now reacted with vigour. In a running battle, which kept the patriots constantly on foot without food, water and rest across a distance of fifty one miles from Dindigul to Vettilagundu for three days together, the exhausted insurgents were finally overwhelmed[48]

46. *Ibid.*, 20 October, 1801, Vol. 288, pp. 6844-6936.
47. *Ibid.*, 22 December 1801, Vol. 290, p. 8080.
48. *Ibid.*, 27 October, 1801, Vol. 288, p. 7108.

The principal rebels faced execution. Marudu Pandyan, the popular leader of the rebels, together with his gallant brother Vella Marudu, was executed on the ruins of the fort of Tirupatore on the 24th of October 1801.[49] Among the multitude who faced their fate at the same spot were Sevata Tambi and Sivagnanam, the sons of Marudu Pandyan, Karutha Tambi and Molly Kutty Tambi, the sons of Vella Marudu, Muthuswamy, the young son of Sevata Tambi, Muthukaruppa Tevar, styled the rajah of Ramanathapuram and the Poligar of Kadalkudi.[50] In fact the vindictive Englishman hanged grand fathers, sons and grand sons together in common gibbet. The head of Marudu Pandyan was severed and taken to Kalayarkoil, while the body was buried at Tirupatore-now in Scottish Mission compound. Oomathurai and Sevatiah were taken to Panjalamkurichi and beheaded on 16th November.[51] Seventy three of the principal rebels were condemned to perpetual banishment. Among them were Vengum Peria Wodaya Tevar of Sivaganga, Booma Nayak of Verappur, Dalaway Kumaraswamy Nayak of Panjalamkurichi and Doraiswamy, the son of Marudu Pandyan.[52] On the 11th of February 1802 the prisoners on board *Admiral Nelson* sailed from Tutukudi. The voyage, long and tedious, lasted for seventy six days. Kept under strict restraint and handcuffed with iron in pairs, the prisoners suffered miserably. In the course of the voyage two died of sickness and one was

49. Madras Council, 20 October 1802, Military Despatches to England, Vol. 33, p. 668.
50. Madras Council, 20 October 1801, Military Consultations Vol. 288, pp. 6867-6895.
No attempt is made so far to preserve this spot of executions.
51. James Welsh, *Military Reminiscences*, Vol. I, pp. 133-134.
52. Madras Council, 20 February 1802, Military Consultations, Vol. 193, p. 1318.
In 1821 Doraiswamy was permitted to return. On his arrival at Madras, he sought permission to reside in Sivaganga. This was granted, but on his journey he took ill at Vandiyoor and died. The body was cremated at Kalayarkoil. He was survived by a son called Marudu Sherogar. (Judicial Consultations, 25 May, 1821. Vol. 157, p. 1432.)

drowned. The rest of the prisoners, seventy in number, reached Penang on the 26th of April 1802. Soon after their arrival at the destination, one third of them fled in different directions. But their agony preyed upon them so much that twenty one of them died within five months of banishment.[53]

Character of the Rebellion

The Rebellion of 1800-1801 was organised with a predetermined motive of destroying British imperialism. It spread over an extensive region and assumed the proportions of a mass movement. The popular leaders, of whom Marudu Pandyan was the most conspicuous, spearheaded the struggle, while the peasants furnished the fighting material. Relying upon guerilla tactics, the gallant patriots won brilliant victories, liberated a vast territory and held the British power at bay. Yet ultimately they were defeated. This was more because of the support extended by the local princes to the alien ruler and the collapse of the simultaneous insurrections in Malabar and Mysore than due to any superior military strategy or striking power of the enemy.

The struggle was attended with bitter ferocity and immense slaughter. The rebels paid more dearly than the English did, as they were neither disciplined nor adequately armed. Though the rebels had a well concerted plan of action, it did not work up to expectations. In the beginning the rebellion broke out in Coimbatore and Dindigul, but the other parts of Tamil Nadu remained quiet. It was only when these rebellions were suppressed that fresh rising broke out in Tirunelveli, Madurai and Thanjavur. Hence the Company found it no impossible a task to crush the rebellion. Still certain trends in the rebellion tend to establish that it assumed the proportions of a popular rebellion. The proclamations of the rebels indicate that they believed in a mass movement against the British. They appealed to all major castes-the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas, the Sudras and the

53. James Welsh, *Military Reminiseences*, Vol. I, pp. 201-202.

Muslims-to unite together and free the country from European rule.[54] Further, the people of different castes, Maravas, Nadars, Totiens, Kallars, Paravas, Gounders and Muslims joined the rebellion irrespective of their linguistic or racial considerations. The English records of the period refer to the inhabitants of different territories flocking to the rebel ranks quite voluntarily. In addition to these, the *kuravai* which was the war cry of the rebels and the *killah*, a leaf pierced with the nail, when sent to the villages, served the purpose of summons to bring the inhabitants to the battlefields.[55] Still defeat came because of the military strength of the Company, the support of its allied powers and inferior equipments.

54. Revenue Sundries, Vol. 26, p. 447.
55. Madras Council, 22 December 1801, Military Consultations, Vol. 290, p. 8178.

Chapter XIX

VELLORE MUTINY

The patriots involved in the South Indian Rebellion made a valiant but final endeavour against the English, when they recouped their eclipsed energies in the organisation of another struggle in 1806. After the suppression of the widespread Rebellion of 1800-1801, the rebels made Vellore the centre of their activity. This place became, as S. S. Furnell has asserted, the seat of "deep and dark intrigues." Futteh Haidar, who was associated with the organisation of the Anti-British Confederacy of 1800 continued his work in secret, as the result of which not fewer than 3000 rebels of Kannada Nadu settled either in the town of Vellore or its vicinity.[1] During the British military operations in the west many more of the vanquished rallied to the cause, upheld by the prince.[2] The English contributed to the collusion of the rebel elements against their authority, when they unwittingly inducted into Vellore the remnants of the broken ranks of the insurgents of Tamil Nadu. Besides the European troops, the garrison of Vellore in 1806 consisted of six companies of the first battalion and all the companies of the second battalion of the Twenty-third Regiment, which was raised in Tirunelveli soon after the suppression of the Rebellion in 1801. Many rebels, who had been reduced to dire straits in consequence of their discomfiture in their struggle and the confiscation of their properties, as well as the inhabitants whose relatives were slain by the English allowed themselves to be recruited into the service of the aliens.[3] With the admission of these sepoys into the Fort of Vellore, it became the meeting ground of the rebel forces of Tamil and Kannada regions, as Coimbatore

1. S. S. Furnell, *The Mutiny of Vellore*, pp. 16-17.
2. Secret Sundries, 1801, Vol. 303, p. 344.
3. C. Hayavadana Rao (ed.), *Mysore Gazetteer*, Bangalore, 1946, Vol. 2, p. 2748.

had been in 1800. Thus the English by sheer ignorance introduced a *Trojan horse* into the citadel. It is evident that the Peninsular Confederacy furnished in Futteh Haidar a leader for a fresh venture, while the Rebellion of 1800-1801 supplied in the rebel elements an instrument at Vellore for the execution of the long cherished dream. Now the chieftains too drew closer to the scene, as they found it possible to exploit the favourable circumstances that a combination of factors offered. As the English themselves had admitted, these enterprizing chiefs began to take an interest in the developments, for they wished for a revolution and to destroy the British authority.[4] The sepoys and the migrants to Vellore entered into a conspiracy and held frequent deliberations, attended by the sons of Tipu. This patriotic movement progressed to such an extent that as in the organisation of the Rebellion of 1800-1801 the rebels exchanged betel so as to bind themselves together for the attainment of the common goal.[5]

Agnew's Turbans

The English in the mean time enforced certain innovations in the administration of the sepoy establishments. They prohibited all marking on the forehead, which were intended to denote caste or sect and the use of ornaments and directed the sepoys to cut their moustaches to a set pattern.[6] Added to these, Adjutant General Agnew, the assassin of the patriots, designed and introduced under his direct supervision a new model turban for the sepoys.[7] On the 9th of June 1806 upwards forty of these *Agnew's turbans* had been put on without objection by the Fourteenth Native Regiment. Soon a concourse of several hundred men, who had already assembled at a distance not far off, uttered a current of the vilest abuse at them for having consented to wear them. The mob was dis-

4. Secret Sundries, Vol. 5, 80, p. 2256.
5. Secret Sundries, 1806, Vol. 1, p. 217 and C. Hayavadana Rao, (ed) *Mysore Gazetteer*. Vol. 2, Part 4, p. 2748.
6. Secret Sundries, 1809, Vol. I, p. 269.
7. *Ibid*., p. 173.

persed yet this was followed by several sepoys throwing off the turbans in a turbulent manner. However all were reduced to subordination and forced to wear the turbans.[8]

The British administrators expressed different views on the issue. William Bentinck, the Governor of Madras, conducted an enquiry and reported that the opposition which came in the wake of the introduction of new turbans was destitute of any foundation in either Hinduism or Islam.[9] A court of enquiry constituted with G. Harcourt, R. Gillespie, I. Kennedy and I. Munro to go into the question too found nothing so strange in this reform as to enrage the sepoys. It felt that the instigations of the captive princes and their adherents led to the organisation of the conspiracy against the British administration.[10] On the other hand a special commission headed by Major General Pater had observed that the innovations in the dress and influence of the family of Tipu served as the causes of the conspiracy. J. F. Cradock, the Commander in Chief, in his report to the Court of Directors asserted that the alternations in the dress of the sepoys had been nothing more than a pretext; their real object was the re-establishment of the Mohammadan power. Major Hazlewood of the second battalion of the Twenty-fourth Regiment had supported this view.[11] However, a court of enquiry consisting of A. Scott, Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm and Lieutenant Colonel John Munro, that went into the issue in 1807, concluded that the view that the sepoys wanted the restoration of Mohammadan power was not supported by sufficient grounds. Highly dissatisfied with these divergent views, the Court of Directors removed Bentinck and Cradock from their offices and proceeded to review the several reports on the issue. It concluded as a last resort: "Immediate cause of the discontent among the sepoys was the introduction of certain innovations to their dress, which were offensive, and

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 166-167.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 176 and 179.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
11. C. Hayavadana Rao (ed), *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. 2, pp 1750-1751.

as they held, degrading to them, and that the captive sons of the late Tipu Sultan, with their adherents and abettors took occasion, from the dissatisfaction of the Sepoys, to instigate them to insurrection and revolt, with the view of effecting their own liberation and the restoration of the Mohammadan power."[12]

It cannot be denied that the changes in dress would have caused concern to the tradition minded, but being of minor significance, of late introduction and of restricted application, it procluded the possibility of any widely organised conspiracy against the British rule. This is indicated by the early British enquiries and if the Court of Directors settled on its conclusion, it is to be attributed to its failure to locate the underlying causes. Restricted to the immediate and superficial factors, the enquiry in fact failed to bring to light the deep seated causes that made Vellore a centre of intrigue and conspiracy. Had the English sought to enquire into the implications of the assembling of a large crowd as in a concerted move and abusing the sepoys for having consented to wear the Agnew's turbans, that would have perhaps led them to the discovery of the extent of the collusion of the sepoys from the South with the settlers from the West, but they failed and missed the identification of the real causes.

The rebels of Vellore as in the Rebellion of 1800-1801 endeavoured to bring the insurgent forces of the peninsula under a common banner and to restore the monarchs to their former status of dignity. Collaboration had been so widely concerted as to gain support from different quarters. The inhabitants of Pallikonda and the sepoy detachment that was stationed at Wallajabad, taking part in the conspiracy, offered their co-operation.[13] Another detachment that was cantoned at Chittoor was implicated in the intrigues.[14] The rebels of Vellore had entered into an understanding with the

12. *Ibid.*, p 1751.
13. Secret Sundries, 1806, Vol. 1, p. 546
14. *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 2257

inhabitants of Arcot for fighting the common enemy.[15] It is not certain whether the disaffected inhabitants of the West agreed to rise in a simultaneous rebellion but they promised their support and co-operation. Steps had been taken for rushing aid from Mysore to Vellore on the outbreak of the insurrection.[16] Disaffection that had been manifest at Chicacole and Hyderabad in Andhra Desa, synchronised with the defiant moves in several places in Kannada Nadu and Tamil Nadu. It was possible that the sepoys from the far South communicated their sentiments to their relatives and friends in the Subsidiary Force stationed at Hyderabad and in turn the latter to Chicacole.[17] The sepoys held secret meetings with

A view of Vellore Fort

15. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 230
16. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 237
17. *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 1799-1802.

the inhabitants of Hyderabad at night and the intelligence gathered by the Company, indicated that they had taken a solemn oath of secrecy and mutual support. The Nizam had complete knowledge of the plot, yet transmitted no information to the Company.[18] The Chicacole battalion waited for the outbreaks at Hyderabad before it defied the British command.[19]

Collapse of the Mutiny

The patriots decided to rise in rebellion in the early morning of the 13th of July, 1806. The same date was spoken of at Hyderabad as the appointed time for mutiny by the Subsidiary Force, that was stationed there. The people friendly to the Company, warned the English officers of the native corps to be upon their guard.[20] To herald this movement the rebels decided to occupy Vellore, as the confederates sought to occupy Coimbatore in 1800, so that they could have a strong hold in which they could secure themselves until the planned insurrections in other regions drove the English out. As part of their design they decided to seize a treasure of three lakhs of *pagodas*, deposited at Chittoor. In the mean time the insurgent forces in different regions waited to know what success attended the daring venture at Vellore and other barracks before they themselves plunged into the fray.[21] Upon the overthrow of the British sway, the patriots decided to elevate a son of Tipu as the ruler of Mysore[22] and to re-establish the independence of the Nizam.[23]

On the 9th of July 1806 a number of horsemen with a large train of attendants appeared in Vellore, behaving in a very disorderly and riotous manner and engaging in sham fight-

18. *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 1677
19. *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 1803
20. *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 1799-1803.
21. *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 2257.
22. *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 2257.
23. *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 1677.

ing with each other.[24] A general rising was determined on the night of 12th July, but due to the intemperance of a jamindar it was precipitated before the appointed day.[25] At 3 O' clock in the morning of the 10th the sepoys at Vellore rose and commenced heavy firing upon the quarters of the English officers and the barracks of the Sixtyninth Regiment. They annihilated a body of Europeans at the main gate, destroyed the guard of the magazine and gained possession of the Fort.[26] Moving to the building that housed the captive princes, the sepoys raised the cry: "Come out, Nawab, Come out, Nawab, there is no fear". This was supposed to have been addressed to Futteh Haidar. Now a flag—an old one of Tipu—green stripes on a red field with a sun in the centre[27] was hoisted on the flag-staff while all raised 'ding' 'ding'.[28]

The occupation of the Fort of Vellore represented a master stroke of a co-ordinated stratagem, but the success did not last long. As the mutiny came as a premature out-break, it did not act as the signal to similar risings in different quarters. Dissatisfaction was manifest on the 13th of July at Wallajabad and a defection was detected in the Subsidiary Force at Hyderabad,[29] but they came late and developed into no rebellion as to be of any assistance to the sepoys of Vellore. A relief expedition, commanded by Colonel Gillespie, reached the rebel stronghold, bombarded the gate and forced its entry into the ramparts.[30] In a sharp engagement the sepoys had killed 113 Europeans but they lost 350 themselves. Five hundred of the mutineers fell as prisoners to the enemy.[31]

24. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 234
25. *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 1799-1803.
26. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 182-183.
27. C. Hayavadana Rao (ed), *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. 2, pp. 2748-2750.
28. Secret Sundries, 1806, Vol. 1, p. 234.
29. *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 1799-1803 and S. S. Furnell, *The Mutiny of Vellore*, p. 9.
30. Secret Sundries, Vol. 1, pp. 152-183.
31. S. S. Furnell, *The Mutiny of Vellore*, pp. 7-9.

This marked the failure of the last bid made by the insurgents under the inspiration of the South Indian Rebellion. The Company now proceeded to strengthen the European element in the military establishments and reorganise the administration of the forts. These reforms contributed to the consolidation of its sway.

Chapter XX

COMPANY'S LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

After their victory over the Peninsular Confederacy organised by the rebels, the English proceeded with the reorganisation of its administration of the Tamil districts. With this end in view, they reformed the land revenue administration, reorganised the judicial system and promoted communications. Among the different spheres of their activity, land revenue received the primary consideration, for as M. Ruthnaswamy rightly pointed out, "the revenue was beyond all questions the first subject of the Company's Government, that on which all the rest depended and to which every other was made subservient".[1]

Permanent Revenue Settlement

When the Company took over the direct administration of the country, it found that different forms of revenue collection were in operation. They were inherited from the period that preceded and subject to variation from place to place and from period to period. The administration entered into settlements with peasants or village headmen or zamindars for shorter or longer periods for the collections of land revenue. In 1792 when the Company acquired possession of Salem, Collector Alexander Read and his assistant, Thomas Munro experimented with ryotwari system. They made systematic study of the revenue system and concluded that the ryotwari was the best suited to the country. Accordingly they dispensed with the middlemen and collected the revenue directly from the peasants. At the same time there prevailed indirect forms of the collection of revenue through the agency of poligars, renters and headmen of the villages.[2] The existence of these

1. M. Ruthnaswamy, *Some Influences that made the British Administrative System in India*, London, 1939, p. 231.
2. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 4 September, 1799, Vol. 95, para 1-76.

different forms of collection gave scope to oppression and corruption. The people were compelled to sell their lands, cattle and utensils to find money for the payment of taxes.[3] The administration was required to interfere with the life of the people and to maintain a cumbersome machinery for frequent assessments. The Board of Revenue remarked: "In the pacific dispositions and habitual subjection of the natives, we enjoy security without example in the records of history." The surest way to retain possession of the vast country seemed to be the evolution of a system which gave the least scope for frequent interference with the life of the people.[4] Added to these, the great extent of land held by the Company, vast details of accounts, collusion of revenue servants with the tax payers and the intricacies that attended the assessment contributed to the traditional struggle between oppressive exaction and fraudulent evasion. These considerations led the English to believe that introduction of permanent revenue settlement offered the best remedy to the varied evils that attended the system.

Accordingly the Court of Directors instructed the Company's administrators to assess the revenue on a permanent basis as it was done in Bengal.' In 1801 Edward Clive, the Governor of Madras, directed the Board of Revenue to make a detailed study of the system of collections and to frame the necessary regulations. The rules, that the Board of Revenue formulated, stipulated the class of landholders, specified the rent that was to be collected and defined the rights and duties of the tenants and zamindars.[5]

A commission headed by William Petrie introduced this reform in stages. It divided the district of Chengalpattu into estates, assessed them on a permanent basis and sold them in auction to the highest bidders for the purpose of the collec-

3. *Ibid.*, December 1797, Vol. 91, pp. 5381-5384.
4. *Ibid.*, 4 September 1799, Vol. 96, pp. 1764-1798.
5. *Ibid.*, 4 September 1799, Vol. 96, pp. 1804-1806.

tion of land revenue. In Ramanathapuram, Dindigul and Tirunelveli it was introduced in the *palayams*. Padmattur Woya Tevar of Sivaganga and Mangaleswari Nachiyar of Ramanathapuram were granted proprietory rights on these territories in return for fixed payments of rent. By 1802, the revenues in parts of Salem Baramahal were assessed on a permanent basis. The poligars became zamindars and palayamsbe came zamindaries. Those who gained possession of estates through auction were called muttadars.

The *sanads*, which were granted to the proprietors of the estates, specified the terms of the permanent settlement. The assessment that was made over their lands was declared as perpetual. The rent that was fixed related only to land revenue but not to other sources of income like excise and customs. The share of the government was fixed at two thirds of what was collected at the time of assessment. The claims of the zamindars and muttadars upon the royts were restricted to customary rates. They were to issue *pattas* to the tenants stipulating what they were to receive as tax. If the ryot failed to pay the taxes, the zamindar could dispossess his property but not otherwise. On the other hand if the zamindar himself failed, the government could confiscate his property or assume possession of his estate.[6] The tenants as well as the lords were free to seek justice against arbitrary proceedings from the law courts. Eager to assure itself of a steady income and to free itself from a complicated system of collection, the Company introduced the permanent settlement. But it did no justice to the interests of the peasants. It was a flagrant misuse of power that the English deprived the peasants of their rights on land, grouped their holdings into estates and sold them to the highest bidders. They transformed a few rich individuals into lords over the independent villages. The peasants could seek justice from the courts but for all practical purposes this was not easy. The poverty stricken people, ignorant of

6. Madras Council, Revenue Despatches to England, May, 1803, Vol. 528, p. 546.

the proceedings of the court, found it impossible to defend themselves against the powerful zamindars.[7] The Company could have done justice had it concluded individual settlements with the peasant proprietors. But to the Company selfish interests more than popular sentiments and expediency rather than respect for rights counted. No wonder with the lapse of time the permanent system came to be discredited. In Chengalpattu, Salem, Dindigul, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli the system failed and a great part of the land fell into the direct possession of the Government. The Board of Revenue attributed the failure of this settlement to over assessment and the neglect of cultivation by the zamindars. Yet the permanent system continued to function in one form or other upto the year 1921-22.[8]

Village Settlement

Because of the declining expectations about the success of the permanent revenue settlement, the members of the Thanjavur Commission and Board of Revenue formulated a proposal in favour of village settlement. Hodgson, Member of Board of Revenue, pointed out that the country consisted of numerous villages, each with its own boundaries and interests. From the wet lands the circar collected forty to sixty per cent of the *gross produce, after deducting a certain* portion for meeting the expenses for threshing. From the dry lands it received the tax in cash, but the rates varied. In the state of Travancore where the Hindu tradition continued the rates continued low for the peasants of the higher communities. But in the Tamil districts as, the Telugu-Muslim tyranny came to prevail, a tradition of oppression was established. This was continued by the English. Hodgson favoured a settlement with all the mirasdars of a village on the basis of the extent of cultivation, level of prices and the rates of taxes in the previous years. If the mirasdars refused their consent, the villages were to be formed into *muttas* and sold to the highest bidders. This lease

7. *Ibid.*, 23 March 1814, Vol. pp. 51-52.
8. *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. pp. 462-471.

was to be restricted to a period of three years.[9]

Thomas Munro on the other hand suggested a permanent ryotwari settlement. According to him the existing assessment was to be reduced by twenty five per cent so as to provide against crop failure, want of productivity and the like and the balance must be fixed as the share of the state. His idea was to guarantee a settled income for the Government and to provide for further increase with the extension of cultivation and expansion of population. However, the Government found his proposal inacceptable, for it could not part with any part of its revenue. Also it was not sure whether the benefit would go to the peasants, as the proverbially corrupt tahsildar and other revenue servants were capable of collecting the same old rates under one pretext or the other.[10]

Lord Bentinck, Governor of Madras (1803—6), advocated a system which would be agreeable to the customs of the inhabitants, less oppressive and at the same time more profitable. To him and the Board of Revenue the village lease system appeard to meet these requirements. Accordingly between 1804 and 1814 the village lease system was implemented in the districts of Tirunelveli, Tiruchirapalli, Coimbatore, South Arcot and North Arcot. In 1810 on the expiry of the village lease in Thanjavur, where it was in vogue, it was renewed for a period of five years.

Under this system the Company farmed out the lands of a village to the principal cultivators of the village, whether they were head inhabitants or mirasdars, or to the village community. They further divided and leased the land to the individual ryots.[11] This settlement was to work for a period of ten years. Subsequently a standard rent called *sist*

9. The Asylum Press, *Almanack and Directory of Madras and South India*, 1931-1932, p. 203.
10. Board of Revenue, Consultations, 4 December 1807, No. 258.
11. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, Vol. 263, p. 1036.

was to be permanently fixed with reference to average collections during the previous years and permanent resources of the village. However, in the underdeveloped villages where the state of cultivation was poor and poverty of the inhabitants was general, temporary settlements were made. So long as the *sist* was paid regularly, the renters were permitted to possess all their lands. The rate of the *sist* worked at about half of the gross produce, but with the improvement of the field, it was expected to work at one-third. The Government, while introducing this reform, proceeded on the assumption that it owned all the lands, those who cultivated them were its tenants and those who agreed to pay taxes were renters. Yet it expected that through the operation of the village settlement private property would be established, land would become saleable and improvement of the land could be promoted.[12]

Governor George Barlow (1807-1813) and his Council expected that this reform would simplify the revenue system, avoid the troubles of frequent settlements, bring in a saving for the treasury and enable the public servants to concentrate upon the more important of their duties.[13] But the Court of Directors doubted the advantages of any permanent system. They found no difference between the permanent revenue settlement that failed in Bengal and Madras and the permanent village settlement that was in the proecss of implementation in the Tamil districts. On this ground it directed the Madras Council to implement the ryotwari settlement in all the lands, where permanent settlement was not enforced.[14]

Ryotwari Settlement

After a series of experiments with the different forms of revenue administration, the English decided in favour of the

12. Board of Revenue, General Report, 5 October 1808, Vol. 5, pp. 178-181.

13. *Ibid.*, 30 January 1812, Vol. 6, pp. 127-135.

14. *Ibid.*, 30 January 1812, Vol. 6, p. 150.

ryotwari system. Colonel Read followed this indigenous system in Salem and subsequently it was introduced in Kanara, Malabar and Thanjavur. Colonel Munro implemented it in Rayalaseema of Andhra Desa. Its success in this region so much impressed the Court of Directors that they decided in favour of it. They directed the reluctant administration of Madras to enforce it in the place of the village settlement. George Barlow and his Council wrote two despatches in justification of the permanent village settlement but the Court of Directors could not be persuaded. Therefore they instructed the Board of Revenue to introduce it in the non-permanently settled districts. Accordingly, it was implemented in 1814 and was vigorously pursued during the administration of Governor Thomas Munro (1820-1827). This system was eventually adopted in all non-permanently settled villages.[15]

By this settlement, the administration was to ascertain what fields were cultivated and by whom they were held. The Government was to enter into a settlement with each ryot directly as regards the rent that he had to pay. The waste lands were to be regarded as circar property but was to be assessed, when it was brought under the plough. The field registers, maintained in the district *cutcheries*, contained the particulars about the rights and interests of the ryots as well as of the circar. The *patta*, that was issued to the ryots, furnished information about the extent of the field that he held and the amount of rent that was to be paid. It was expected that after the land survey was completed and the rent of every field was permanently fixed, the ryotwari system would be the simplest to be followed. When the holding of each ryot was ascertained and the rent was fixed, he was not to be required to pay more but should be allowed an abatement in the event of calamities. Thomas Munro argued: "the ryot has the advantage of knowing in the beginning of the season when he ploughs his land, the exact amount of what he is to pay. He

15. Court of Directors, Revenue Despatches to Madras, 12 April 1815, para 50-126.

knows the fixed rents of the different fields which he cultivates and that the demands upon him cannot exceed the total amount, he knows the utmost limit of his rent, not only for the present but for every succeeding year, for it cannot be raised unless he takes additional land and he is thereby the better enabled to provide for the regular discharge of his kists and against the losses of bad, by the profits of good season''.[16]

In 1818 on the recommendation of the Board of Revenue, the ryotwari system was improved upon. The ryots were given the freedom to take up such lands that they needed and give up others. It was also decided that the settlement should be made in all cases with persons, who had a hereditary right on their holdings and to reduce the rates whenever there was an over assessment. No tax was to be collected from unproductive lands or improvements and no forced cultivation was to be resorted to. Complaint against exaction could be made to the collector and cases against over assessment could be filed in zillah courts.[17] However, it must be pointed out that as in case of permanent and village lease settlements, the Government proceeded on the assumption that all land belonged to it, that the peasants were mere tenants who paid not tax but rent and that the people lived just for supporting a foreign Government. This approach based upon Islamic tradition violated the Hindu concept that land belonged to those who tilled it.[18]

By 1857, most of the Tamil Country was brought under the ryotwari system. The share of the circar was paid in cash and assessment was made liable for revision once in every thirty years. In 1858 a survey was ordered with the object of delimiting the boundaries of the villages and holdings. To-

16. Board of Revenue, 5 January 1807, Proceedings, para 9.

17. *Ibid.*, 1st September 1818, Vol. 1803, p. 10234.

18. Board of Revenue, 3 January 1820, General Report Vol. 10, p. 233.

gether with this survey land registers, field maps and taluq maps were prepared. In each land register the number, nature, tenure, ownership and assessments were indicated. The assessment was calculated at a percentage of the gross produce, the maximum ranging from thirty to fifty per cent. In 1864 it was laid down that the share of the Government should not exceed half of the net produce ascertained on the basis of the following calculation. Land was graded and subgraded on basis of productivity, a part of it was reduced for giving margin to bad seasons and poor land, the net produce was converted in terms of money, the estimated cost of cultivation was deducted from it and the rate of assessment was then fixed so as not to exceed half of the net money value of the produce.[19]

In consonance with the liberal principles of the times, the Company's administration sought to secure for the ryots a moderate and equitable assessment for their lands. Compared to the permanent settlement and the village lease, the ryotwari settlement appeared more satisfactory to the Government and more beneficial to the peasantry. It established a direct contact between the administrators and the cultivators, as the middle men were dispensed with. The frequent tours, that were inherent in its working, enabled the English officials to learn more about the customs of the land. It diffused the right of property more extensively than any other system did, gave the right to the cultivator to pay the rent in money and the freedom to enjoy the benefits of improvements that he effected without paying any additional tax.

However, it cannot be asserted that the ryotwari settlement gave adequate protection to the ryots against corrupt and arbitrary proceedings. It greatly expanded the powers of the revenue servants, for they were given the discretion to decide the quality of the land and rate of assess-

19. G. T. Boag, *The Madras Presidency*, 1881-1931, Madras, 1933, pp. 44, and Baliga, *Manual of Madras Administration*, Vol. 2, pp. 82-97.

ment. A moderate assessment depended much upon the ability of the ryots to purchase the favour of the public officials, particularly the corrupt karnam and the tahsildar.[20] The administrators displayed a tendency to collect as much as possible from the helpless cultivators, whether the season was good or bad and whether he cultivated the entire field or not. As a result the ryots were subjected to oppression, torture and forced labour and deprived of their possessions.[21] Further, the system greatly contributed to agricultural indebtedness. The peasants needed money to purchase seeds, to cultivate the fields and to pay the taxes. The period from 1810 to 1830 was marked by a severe depression. The prices of agricultural products declined sharply but no remission could be obtained.[22] Unable to find any source of relief, they turned to the money lenders and borrowed money at high rates of interest, inviting more of misery. The debt ridden and poverty stricken peasants fell easy victims to the famines and epidemics which were common during this period of Company's administration.

20. Mukkerji, Nilmani, *The Ryotwari System in Madras*, Calcutta, 1962, p. 470.
21. Board of Revenue, Consultations, 1818, Vol. 241, pp. 4703-4706.
22. Madurai District Records, Vol. 533, pp. 162-164.

ORGANISATION OF THE JUDICIARY

The Judiciary of Madras Presidency was of gradual growth. From the very infancy of the settlement at Madras, the British Government paid due attention to the administration of justice. The Charter of 1661 constituted the Governor and Members of the Council of Fort St. George into a criminal court. They sat as Court of Oyer and Terminer and tried and decided criminal cases. In course of time further reforms were rendered necessary. The Charter of 1687 created a municipality for Madras. The Mayor and Aldermen, acting as Court of Record, tried and decided civil and criminal cases. These courts, however, were intended for the settlement of cases of the European inhabitants of Madras and not of the Indians. The Charter of 1753 expressly excluded the disputes between the Indians from the jurisdiction of the English courts.

However, the march of events rendered more of reforms essential. During early periods the suits were simple by nature and limited in number. The administration of justice did not seem very intricate. But with the growth of the settlement and the expansion of the Presidency, the suits multiplied in number and diversity. New legal issues sprung up and the inability of the existing courts to deal with them hampered the administration of justice. In consequence Parliament enacted fresh legislations from time to time either for establishing new courts of law or for improving the existing ones. These trends in the judicial organisation of Madras were particularly conspicuous in 1798-1802.

The Court of Recorder of Madraspatnam was instituted under the Charter granted by George III in 1798. It consisted of recorder, mayor and aldermen. Sir Thomas Strange[1] was appointed the first Recorder. On the 1st November 1798 the recorder, mayor and aldermen assembled in the Town Hall at

Fort St. George and through a ceremonious function qualified themselves for the discharge of their duties.[1]

The jurisdiction of the Recorder's Court extended over civil, criminal, ecclesiastical and admiralty cases. It was authorised to administer justice in the settlement of Madras and its subordinate and dependent factories. The limits of the settlement of Madras were not defined. To avoid difficulties arising therefrom Governor Edward Clive (1798-1803) demarcated the boundaries of Madras. The southern border ran along the southern bank of the river St. Thomas as far as the road leading to Long Tank, the western boundary from the Long Tank to the Nungambakkam Tank as far upto the village of Chetput and then upto Perambur and the northern limit along a line from Perambur to Tondiarpet and then to the sea.[2]

The Recorder's Court was an improvement upon the Mayor's Court. It not only took over all judicial powers, so long exercised by the Mayor's Court, but also those of the Governor and Council in their capacity as the Court of Appeal and Court of Oyer and Terminer and Goal Delivery.[3] Yet the jurisdiction of the court did not extend over the cases between the Indians or over the territorial possessions of Fort St. George. Added to this, Parliament entertained a view that the judiciary in India should be separated from the executive and that the judicial administration should be reserved for the British Crown. These considerations led to the establishment of the Supreme Court, replacing the Recorder's Court.

Creation of the Supreme Court

An Act of Parliament constituted the Supreme Court of

1. Sir Thomas Strange had previously served as the Chief justice in Canada. With the establishment of Supreme Court at Madras, he became its first Chief Justice.
2. Madras Council, Public Despatches to England, 1799, Vol. 33, pp. 26-27.
3. Madras Council, Public Consultations, November 1798, Vol. 230, pp. 4072-4073.

Judicature at Madras in 1801.[4] It consisted of a Chief Justice and two Puisne Justices. Sir Thomas Strange, the Recorder of the Recorders' Court, was appointed the first Chief Justice, while Henry Guillim and Sullivan the first Puisne Justices. The Chief Justice was entitled to a rank next to the Governor of Fort St. George and Puisne Justices next to the Members of the Council.[5]

The Supreme Court at Madras, unlike the Recorder's Court, was endowed with extensive jurisdiction. It heard and decided all civil suits and actions, which were till then tried and determined by the Major's Court and the Recorder's Court at Madras. The Justices also wielded judicial powers as the Conservators of the Peace and Coroners within and throughout the settlement of Fort St. George, the town of Madras, the subordinate factories and all the territories subject to or dependent upon the Government of Madras. They were empowered to function as a Court of Equity, having equitable jurisdiction over the persons coming under the Court's authority. In addition the Supreme Court dispensed with justice as a Court Oyer and Terminer and Goal Delivery for Madras and subordinate factories and as a Court of Admiralty. It had jurisdiction over cases relating to treason, murder, other felonies, forgery, perjuries, trespasses and other crimes. It was entitled to hear and determine all suits and actions that were brought against the inhabitants of Madras. Cases, in which the Hindus were parties, were to be decided according to the laws and usages of the Hindus and if the parties were Mohammadans, then according to the laws and usages of the Mohammadans. On the other hand a suit in which a Hindu and a Mohammadan were the contending parties, it was to be decided according to the laws and usages of the community of the dependent. Though the Court was given wide powers, certain persons in their official

4. The Supreme Court at Calcutta was established by the Regulating Act of 1733.

5. Court of Directors, Public Despatches from England, 11 February 1801, Vol. 104, pp. 55-58.

capacity were excluded from its jurisdiction. They included the Governor General and Members of his Council, the Governor of Fort St. George and Members of his Council and the persons of Chief Justice and Puisne Justices. The Court decided the cases by majority vote of the judges, present. The President of the Court had also a casting vote. The appeals from the decisions of the Supreme Court lay to the King in Council.[6] The sheriff of Madras, assisted by zillah judges, collectors and commercial residents enforced judicial verdicts.[7]

The establishment of the Supreme Court by an Act of Parliament imparted a fresh vigour to the judicial system of Madras. For the first time in the history of the Presidency, a central court, bestowed with jurisdiction over all the inhabitants of the territories, subject to or dependent upon it, was created. It functioned as a Court of the Crown and it exercised its powers independent of the Governor in Council. However, like the Supreme Court at Calcutta, it had no smooth relation with the executive. When Lord Clive demarcated the limits of Madras he made no exception of the Chepauk Palace and its grounds-the permanent residence of the Nawab of Arcot-from the jurisdiction of the Court, for he felt the status of the nawabs under the general operation of the public law of the nations would be respected. The Treaty of the Carnatic, which was settled in 1801, also made no change in the legal status of the nawab.[8] Still this issue precipitated a conflict between the judiciary and the executive. The Supreme Court not only refused to exempt the nawab's establishment from its jurisdiction but issued a writ of habeas corpus for the release of certain persons, whom the nawab kept in custody.[9] This issue placed

6. *Ibid.*, Vol. 104, pp. 305-308.
7. Madras Council, Public Despatches to England, 20 October 1802, Vol. 35, pp. 505-506.
8. Madras Council, Public Consultations, 3 September 1802, Vol. 25, pp. 3643-3648
9. Madras Council, Public Consultations, 10 November 1801, Vol 25, pp. 1328-1329.

Edward Clive in an embarrasing situation. In his capacity as Governor he was bound to support the rights of the nawab as a sovereign prince according to the terms of the Treaty of the Carnatic. At the same time he was obliged to honour the authority of the Judiciary By a formal request to the nawab he secured the release of the prisoners and appealed to the Court of Directors to make a permanent arrangement to prevent the interference of the Court in the exercise of nawab's authority.[10] Accordingly, the Court of Directors exempted the person of the nawab, his family, servants and all his property from the jurisdiction of the Court. But this privilege, granted to the nawab, did not extend to any persons, who sought asylum with the nawab for escaping the process of law.[11]

The creation of new courts and other attendant factors rendered certain changes in the administration of justice at the lower level necessary. The Supreme Court took over most of the duties, so far performed by the Master in Equity. As a result, the powers, duties and income of the Court of the Master in Equity diminished considerably. It became outmoded and ceased to function as an effective judicial organ at the lower level. Hence the question of re-organising the administration of justice for such cases as affecting title, deed, securities and wills engaged the attention of the Government. Sir Thomas Strange suggested the appointment of two professional men for the settlement of such cases, but Lord Clive found it impossible to implement it without the authority of an Act of Parliament. Therefore he proceeded to reorganise the existing Court of Request, for which a Parliamentary legislation of 1800 granted him authority. The Court of Request consisted of commissioners, who were selected from the civil servants and

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 1335-38.

11. Court of Directors, *Political Despatches from England*,] 20 October 1803, Vol. 3, pp. 51-52. The Supreme Court at Madras continued to function till 1861. By the High Courts of 1861 it was replaced by the High Court. Similar High Courts were established at Calcutta and Bombay in the same year.

merchants of Madras.[12] The jurisdiction of the court, as settled in 1753, extended to cases of the value of fifteen rupees and subsequently by an Act of 1797 to eighty rupees.[13]

The reorganised Court of Request, designated "the Court of Commissioners for the Recovery of Small Debts" was established on the 1st of January 1802. It consisted of three commissioners who were British subjects, resident within the limits of Fort St. George. The jurisdiction of this court, extended to a sum of 120 pagodas or 360 rupees. It covered a large portion of the transactions of the native dealers of Madras.[14] The Court of Commissioners suspended the Court of Request and functioned under the superintendence of the master in the Supreme Court.[15] This court provided for speedy and easy remedy for the disputes arising from minor claims of people. The poor people by fear of the expense together with an uncertainity of result were deterred from seeking the recovery of their rights in the higher courts. Frequently the creditors of that description were forced to remain satisfied with the vague assurances of their debtors, instead of resorting to the legal processes under circumstance of hazard.[16] The Supreme Court did not give any consideration to the creditors of lower description, when it fixed the table of fees, Due to practical difficulties it made no distinction between a suit which was intended for the racovery of fifty pogodas and that of 5000 pagodas. But the Court of Commissioners fixed the table of fees at a comparatively low rate for the small causes. It was calculated that if a defendant went and heard his cause on the first summons from that court, the

12 Extract of an Act passed in 1800, Public Consultations, 29 December 1801, Vol. 259, pp. 5397-5393.

13. Madras Council, Public Consultations, 29 December 1801, Vol. 259, pp. 5380-5383.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 5389-5415.

15 Walter Grant acted as Master of the Supreme Court as well as Chief Commissioner.

16. Madras Council, Public Consultations, 29 December 1801, Vol. 259, pp. 5384-5387.

cost of both the parties would not exceed fifteen per cent of the amount, involved in the litigation. On the other hand if a defendant stood out all processes of contempt the costs would not exceed twenty per cent of the amount, involved, as court fees. This served as a sufficient check on the increase of the number of litigations and at the same time did not deter a bonafide claimant from seeking recovery of his rights through legal process.[17]

Another judicial reform of the period was the creation of the Court of Wards. It was intended for the protection of the rights and properties of the incapacitated persons. The inherited properties of those, who were incapacitated by minority, sex or general infirmity, were generally placed under the management of other people. The temporary managers often abused the trust and disregarded the rights of the incapacitated persons. Hence the Madras Council sought to remove such instances of glaring injustice by the establishment of the Court of Wards. Legal provisions were made for the proper maintenance of the properties of such handicapped people, the education of the minors and the care of the lunatics. The court was entitled to appoint persons for safeguarding the interests of the incapacitated.[18] It was a welcome measure for protecting the rights of a section of people, who were generally neglected by the society.

Extension of the Judicial System

Besides reorganising and improving the administration of justice in the Presidency, the British extended the judicial system to the provinces. Till 1802 the Company made no systematic attempt to provide an efficient system of judicial administration for the districts. What was provided for was imperfect and inefficient. The collectors of the districts heard and decided the civil cases. The appeals from their decisions

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 5391-5415.
18. Madras Council, Judicial Consultations, 26 August 1803, Vol. 3, pp. 151-153.

lay to the Board of Revenue.[19] Criminal jurisdiction in the district was often exercised by the military tribunals through summary process under serious circumstances. These expedients were intended more for the enforcement of governmental authority than for the equitable distribution of justice. Circumstances too did not seem favourable for the successful working of the law courts, for the inhabitants cherished an independent spirit and were not amenable to the process of law. The English did not possess sufficient means of administration of justice too. But by 1802 they almost surmounted the various obstacles, which impeded the operation of law. The Treaties of Tanjore and the Carnatic removed the difficulties presented by the existence of a divided authority. A sufficient number of qualified servants was available to be posted as judges of the courts. Besides, the Company embarked upon settlement of revenue on a permanent basis. The questions related to the preservation of the respective interests of the government, zamindar and peasants warranted due supervision. These factors rendered the extension of the legal system to the territories of Fort St. George not only possible but also essential.

Accordingly, the British carried into effect the necessary reforms for the administration of justice in the districts. The Cornwallis System, as provided for the judicial administration of Bengal served as a model.[20] To begin with Zillah Courts were set up in the districts of Dindigul and Ramanathapuram, in which assessment of revenue on a permanent basis was completed. The jurisdiction of the Zillah Court extended over

19. *Ibid.*, 1 January 1803, Vol. 3, pp. 1-4.

20. Lord Cornwallis established an ascending hierearchy of civil and criminal courts for Bengal. It consisted of (1) Small Courts for the recovery of small debts, presided over by native commissioners (2) Zillah and city courts presided over by British judges and (3) the Court of Appeal or Sadar Diwani Adalat consisting of the Governor General and Members of his Council. A parallel organisation of criminal courts, Courts of Circuit and Sadar Nizamat Adalat, was also set up.

all civil cases. An Indian commissioner attached to it heard and decided petty cases. The zillah judge also served as the magistrate for the district. In this capacity he controlled the *thanadars* and *dorogas*, who were posted at important places for police duties and the *kavalkars*, who were directed to watch the villages.[21] With the establishment of the Zillah Courts, the collectors ceased to exercise any judicial or police functions.[22] Though the example of Bengal in setting up the Zillah Courts was followed, the local machinery for the performance of police duties was associated with it so as to avoid the employment of a large number of village guards.

The appeals from the Zillah Court lay to the Provincial Court of Appeal. It was the highest civil court in each province. The territories of Fort St. George were divided into four provinces-the Northern, Central, Southern and Western.[23] The Southern Division extended from the southern straits to river Palar, Central Division from the Palar to river Krishna and Northern Division from the Krishna to Ganjam and the Western Division included Malabar, Kanara and Soonda. Along with the Provincial Court of Appeal, the Madras Council instituted a Court of Circuit for each division. The judges of the court toured the districts and tried criminal cases of serious nature. Appeals from the provincial courts lay to the Madras Council, who acted as Court of Appeal for that purpose. The governor and members of his Council constituted themselves into Sadar Adalat or Chief Court of Civil Judicature for hearing appeals from Provincial Courts of Appeal and Foujdary Adalat or chief criminal court for hearing appeals from the Circuit Courts.[24]

21. *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 474. The *tanadars*, the *dorogas* and *kavalkars* were associated with the new set up.
22. Madras Council, Judicial Consultations, 1st January 1803, Vol. 3, pp. 2-4.
23. Lord Cornwallis had divided Bengal into four provinces. He set up provincial courts at Calcutta, Dacca, Murshidabad and Patna.
24. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 9 July 1802, Vol. 117, pp. 2152-2167.

Thus there came into existence two orders of courts- The Supreme Court set up by the Crown and the graded system of courts set up by the Company. It was for the first time in the history of the Tamil Country that an elaborate system of courts was instituted. In reorganising the systems for judicial and police administration, due consideration was given to the customs and practices of the people. Still the system had its own defects. The courts were guided by the British rules of procedure, which were foreign to the country. The inhabitants in general were poor, ignorant and illiterate. Financial inability to proceed to the court, complexity of the processes and uncertainty of result served as factors which often deterred the aggrieved from seeking the help of the court of law. An efficient police was essential for the investigation of cases, for furnishing the evidences and enforcing the injunctions of the law courts, but this was not done. The *kavalkars* were associated with the judicial administration for performing police duties and enforcing the decisions of the courts. By the end of the eighteenth century the institution of village watch or *kaval* had so much degraded into an engine of oppression that it did not serve the purpose of protecting the interests of the people. The association of such a corrupt institution without rectifying its defects, therefore, vitiated the ends of justice. Besides, the enforcement of law by diversified authorities resulted in different standards in the administration of justice. These were real defects in the judicial organisation but perhaps they were unavoidable at an initial stage of extensive organisation of law courts. Yet it cannot be denied that the legal system was made more systematic and centralised than what it had been hitherto and was extended to the provinces, where it had never been heard of.

Reorganisation of Courts

Because of the inadequacies of the system, the Court of Directors appointed a commission under Thomas Munro in 1812 to enquire into the working of the judiciary. On the basis of the report the Madras Government under Governor Munro carried out the reforms in 1816. By these reforms

the entire set up was reorganised with a view to giving a new importance to the traditional system. The village munsiff was appointed to hear, try and determine on his own authority and without appeal, all suits that might be referred to him; the total cost involved in each case not exceeding ten rupees. The provincial courts were empowered to appoint district munsiffs, who could try and determine the suits referred to them against any Indian. The village munsiff as well as the district munsiff were permitted to present the case. The office of the magistrate was transferred from the zillah judge to the collector. Accordingly, collector magistrates, who were to be assisted by assistant magistrates, were appointed. They could arrest persons charged with crime and examine them. The prisoners who appeared guilty were sent to the criminal judge. Also they could decide petty offences, imprison a person upto fifteen days or impose a fine upto fifty rupees. The zillah judges were made criminal judges. They were to examine the prisoners, keep them ready for trial before the Circuit Court and to supervise the working of jails. The Sadar Adalat, as the highest civil court, and the Foujdari Adalat, as the highest criminal court, continued to function and appeals from them could be taken to the Privy Council in England. The defects in these reforms were that without seeking to rectify the corrupt practices at the lower levels, too much of authority was vested in them. The collectors were so over burdened with matters of minor importance that they were prevented from bestowing attention upon important affairs of the district anabled to display their authority. Delay in decision making became inevitable.[25]

After 1816 many changes were not attempted. However in 1821 a number of Provincial and Zillah Courts were established. Because of increasing pressure of work in them auxiliary courts, each under an assistant judge, too were created. Between 1816 and 1861 the jury system was extended to criminal cases and the police authority was separated from

25. Judicial Regulations, Madras, 1816, pp. 1-9.

revenue authority. The Courts of Circuit were abolished and their functions were transferred to the Zillah Courts. In the place of Provincial Courts of Appeal zillah courts were constituted. The Mohammadan criminal law was dispensed with in 1865.

With the implementation of several reforms, the graded system in civil justice consisted of Panchayat (village munsiff), District Panchayat (district munsiff), Zillah Courts and Sadar Adalat. The parallel set up in criminal justice conissted of Assistant Magistrate, District Magistrate, Criminal Court, Court of Circuit and Foujdari Adalat.[26] The English sought to govern the Indians with Indian law and Englishmen with English law, but the Hindu code was found vague, while Muslim code harsh. The English men received a privileged treatment while the Indians not. In addition there functioned two systems, one organised by the Company and the other by the Crown. The law suits were costly and delay in receiving justice was irksome.

In 1861 British Parliament enacted the Indian High Courts Act. It provided for the abolition of the Supreme Court, Sadar Diwani Adalat and Sadar Nizamat (faujdari) Adalat. In their place it established High Court of Judicature at Madras as at Calcutta and Bombay. It was given the right to supervise all other courts, which were subject to its appellate jurisdiction. Thus there came into existence an organised system, with defined jurisdiction.[27]

Police and Prisons

An efficient police system appeared essential not only for the working of the judicial organisation but also for maintaining law and order in the country. In the traditional system

26. Court of Directors, Judicial Despatches from England, 1833, para 5.
27. U. D. Kulshreshtha, *Land Marks in Indian Legal and Constitutional History*, Lucknow, 1969, pp. 192-193.

the *kavalkars* occupied an important place. Controlled by the headmen in the villages and kotwals in the towns they performed police functions. The Company sought to dispense with this system in 1801, when it appointed *sibbendy* peons under the control of the revenue servants for doing this work.[28] As the new arrangements did not work, the Madras Council appointed a commission to suggest changes. In the light of its report it enacted the Regulation of 1816 for entrusting the police duties with the village headmen, the tahsildars, amins, the zamindars, the kotwals and the zillah magistrates in their respective areas of jurisdiction. They were assisted by clerks and peons. This reform represented a compromise with the traditional system for the headmen of villages and kotwals of towns regained a status in the law and order machinery.[29]

Despite this reform there was no improvement in the crime situation. The administration continued to be inefficient, corrupt and oppressive. Because of the combination of revenue and police authority in the same agency, the tahsildars and headmen concentrated on the collection of taxes and neglected the detection of crimes.[30] In 1856 the Court of Directors, greatly concerned at the increasing incidents of crime, particularly gang robberies, called for a remedy. But Lord Harris, the Governor, asserted: no police force could be efficient, unless it be placed under one command and unless there be uniformity of discipline and of method throughout the whole body. The duties of such a core were to consist of the preservation of public peace, protection of person and property, prevention and detection of crime and the procuring of continued accurate information on the state of the country and the feelings and sentiments of the people. In 1857 the Court of Directors sanctioned the reorganisation of the police, as suggested by the Madras Council. Thereupon the government appointed a chief commissioner of police in charge of direction and discip-

28. Judicial Sundries, Madras, 29 April 1803, Vol. 13, p. 2081.

29. Police Department, *The History of the Madras Police*, Madras, 1959, p. 250.

30. Madras Council, Judicial Consultations, 1835, Vol. 290, pp. 4036-4038.

line of the police force. W. Robinson, who was appointed in this post in 1858, gave a report on the constitution of the police, which the Madras Council accepted. Accordingly, the police force consisted of constables, head constables, inspectors, superintendents and a chief commissioner. The village police, now adequately improved and properly controlled, was placed in charge of a village police inspector. Importance was given to training and discipline. As the result of these reforms the police system received a new direction as well as organisation.[31] However, it did not free itself from the inherent evils, for its methods continued crude and corrupt.

Together with the reorganised police the Company created a prison establishment. From the past it inherited a highly irregular system of prison administration. Whoever wielded some power seized the inhabitants, tortured them at will and fined them. These victims were detained in old choultries as well as deserted temples, without any food or water being served. By 1802, however with the introduction of law courts, an attempt was made to organise a prison establishment. Accordingly, the Madras Council laid down rules regarding the construction of prisons, accommodation of the prisoners, extension of medical care and improvement of the morals of the criminals.[32] Still conditions in the jail remained unsatisfactory. Over crowding, inadequate ventillation, poor sanitation, caste based segragation and bad food marked the life in the prisons. Frequently the prisoners came to blows with each other. They bribed the jail peons and with their collusion committed theft in nearby areas or purchased intoxicants and even made their escape.[33] Because of the ordeals in prisons and ravages of epidemics as many as ten per cent of the convicts died every year, against only one per cent in England of the same period.[34] In fact no consideration was given to the value of life.

31. Police Department, *The History of the Madras Police*, pp. 279-285.
32. B. S. Baliga, *Studies in Madras Administration*, Vol. 1, pp. 261-266.
33. Madras Council, Judicial Consultations, April 1846, Vol. 520, p. 1753.
34. Madras Council, Judicial Despatches to England, 15 June 1880, Vol. 6, pp. 21-22.

Chapter XXII

PROGRESS IN LEARNING

The British administration in Tamil Nadu was marked by significant changes in the cultural life of the people. The Tamils never ignored learning, for they had their own traditional system of education. But their institutions went into oblivion, when the missionaries and the administrators introduced the western system. With the spread of education, language too developed. The foreign as well as local scholars made an endeavour to discover the Tamil heritage and to promote a renaissance. Drama, music and dance continued to survive in their traditional forms. However, with the advent of the cinema, the fine arts too experienced changes.

Traditional System

An enquiry instituted in 1822 under the orders of Governor Thomas Munro (1820-27) indicated the existence in the different districts of numerous schools, but mostly restricted among the Brahmins. The statistics furnished by the collectors of the districts revealed that by 1826 there were 12,498 educational institutions for a population of 12,850,941 in the Presidency of Madras. For a population of eight lakhs Madurai district had 844 schools and 13,781 scholars while for a population of 481,000 inhabitants Tiruchirapalli had 799 schools.[1]

These schools were of two grades-elementary schools and high schools. They held their classes in the temple buildings, private houses or at shady places. Normally, the classes began early in the morning and continued late in the evening. No regular periods or age limits were prescribed

1. Government of Madras, G. O. 217, Education, dated 16 April 1883. In 1822 Madurai District included Madurai and Ramanathapuram divisions.

for the admission of the candidates to the courses or for leaving the schools. However, the children joined the classes at the age of five and left them at the age of fifteen. They were required to pay fees ranging from an anna to four rupees a month, in addition to certain presents to the teachers. In the Sanskrit schools the Brahmin pandits gave free instruction, as they considered it their privilege to impart the sacred lore.[2] Except the *devadasis*, the girls did not attend schools.

Reading, writing and arithmetic formed the principal contents of the curriculum. To begin with the scholars learned writing on the sandy ground and then with an iron style on the palm leaves. They also did exercises in writing, pronouncing and methods of distinguishing literary forms from colloquial forms of speech. This kind of instruction continued for about five years, for a student, at times till the boy reached the age of fourteen or fifteen [3] In the high schools at the advanced level commercial accounts, composition of business letters and legal documents, philosophy and jurisprudence were taught. The Brahmins gave importance to the teaching of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and the *Puranas*, while the Muslims that of the *Koran*. Depending upon the mother tongue of the community, the medium of instruction varied-Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit or Marathi.[4]

Every centre of learning gave undue importance to discipline and suppression of aptitudes. Accordingly, the students were required to work hard, to sleep less, to implicity obey the teachers and to abstain from 'evil' thoughts and deeds. As knowledge was considered as the road to spiritual perfection, it was to be obtained through purity of heart and discipline of the body. Any infringement of discipline invited the severest punishment. The offenders were flogged

2. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 10 March 1826, Vol. 214, p. 854.
3. *Ibid.*, 30 September 1825, Vol. 374, p. 850.
4. Education Commission, Report, Vol. 1, p. 57.

with canes, made to stand with one leg up and a brick on and applied with solutions causing irritating sensations. In fact even in their tender age the students experienced some of the barbarities of the age.

When Munro instituted an enquiry into the indigenous system, it was not his idea to interfere with its working. For, he stated: "It was not my intention to recommend any interference whatever in the native schools. Everything of this kind ought to be carefully avoided and people should be left to manage their schools in their own way. . . All that we ought to do is to facilitate the operation of these schools by restoring any funds that may have been diverted from them, and perhaps granting additional ones where it may appear advisable"[5]. However, no grant came from the administration for long and the traditional schools experienced a steep decline since 1800. The causes of the decline were the inherent defects in the system of instruction and the external developments. Though there existed numerous schools, they offered no organised courses of study. Students were admitted and allowed to leave the schools during any part of the year. The conventional subjects were taught in the casual way and no importance was given to the useful subjects like science or history. As a result many of the courses had no bearing on practical life. The students were to learn the verses *verbatim* normally without understanding the implications and without being enabled to criticise. Added to these, the schools attracted neither good teachers nor large number of students. Because of poor and unreliable pay, talented people appeared reluctant to take up teaching. As the *devadasis* sent their daughters to schools, there developed a suspicion that the girls would turn prostitutes if they joined the classes. This discouraged female education too. At the same time the general impoverishment of the country badly affected the schools. With the introduction of European manufactures and the oppressive assessments by the English,

5. Sir Thomas Munro, Minute, 25 June 1822, Revenue Consultations, Vol. 277, paras 1-3.

unemployment increased, rich turned poor and private support to schools dwindled. The parents had no money to defray the expenses of education, while they needed the assistance of their children as soon as their tender limbs were capable of yielding the smallest amount of labour. With no aid forthcoming from the new rulers, the traditional schools languished.[6]

Missionary Endeavour

The Christian missionaries took a pioneering interest in the promotion of education among the Tamils. Guided by humanitarian as well as religious motives, they devised a liberal system of education open to all the inhabitants, irrespective of caste or religion. To begin with it excited the communal and religious suspicions of the caste Hindus, but when they understood the advantage of the new system of education they drew to it in large number. Eager to reach the common people, the missionaries imparted the education in Tamil and provided free feeding. Their usual curriculum for the schools included reading, writing, Biblical lessons and arithmetical tables. At the higher level in the colleges the missionaries offered advanced courses in literature, science, history and other subjects.[7]

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1717 opened two charity schools in Madras to help the poor students. Because of the efforts of Reverend Swartz, the mission started English schools at Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga. The Jesuits made Tiruchirapalli a centre of their activity. Due to their efforts several schools came into existence. The American Jaffna Mission established the American Madura Mission in 1834. Within a few years this mission opened schools at Madurai, Dindigul and Ramanathapuram.[8] In the deep South the Protestant missions started educational insti-

6. Selection of Papers relating to the Records of the East India House, pp. 60-62.
7. Chandler, J. S. *Seventy Five Years in Madura Mission*, p. 49.
8. *The Missionary Herald*, 1837, p. 104.

tutions at Palayamkottai and Nagercoil. In course of time these institutions developed into centres of higher learning.

Upon a review of the progress made by the different missions, the Court of Directors rightly observed: "We can only remark with satisfaction that the educational efforts of Christian missionaries have been more successful among the Tamil population than in any other part of India."[9] Despite this, it could not be denied that the missions encountered formidable difficulties. The wide spread poverty, caste prejudices and religious suspicions came in the way of rapid progress of education under their initiative.

Public Education

The English administration for long hesitated to enter into the field of education. This was because of the influence of *laissez faire* and mercantilism, for it felt that it was the concern of the inhabitants to maintain schools, while it was the concern of the Company to reap the benefits of trade. Further it had no funds to be diverted for undertaking the task of educating the Tamils. However, the situation began to change when the Company's administration keenly felt the need to get educated people to be appointed for clerical jobs. It greatly expanded its administrative system to the remote corners of the country. While the whites could run the departments at the higher level, educated Indians were found fit only for the lower levels. A grant in aid scheme was contemplated upon for the revival of the traditional system of education but this involved so heavy an expenditure that it was not prepared to incur.

Thomas Munro wanted to extend financial aid to the traditional schools, for which he needed 50,000 rupees a year. But under the Charter Act of 1813 British Parliament alloted for the whole of India a meagre sum of one lakh of rupees

9. Court of Directors, Despatch to Bengal Council, 19 July 1854, No. 49.

a year for "The revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India". The allotment under this scheme to the Presidency was so inadequate that no financial support to the private institutions could be considered. In view of this dilemma, the Madras Council decided to have its own way in spending this amount. Accordingly, it established a Board of Public Instruction to promote education and a School Book Society for the purpose of translating good European works into Indian languages and a few public schools. In each district two public schools, one for the Hindus and another for the Muslims, were set up. The teachers of these schools received training in a central school at Madras.[10] By 1834 some seventy tahsildari schools were also opened in the different taluqs of the Presidency. The teachers of these schools were not given any special training. In the district schools English was the medium of instruction and in the taluq schools, Tamil.[11]

In making these beginnings, the English administration entertained no idea to enter the field on a large scale. On the other hand, it wanted to educate the influential people, so that they could join their service and strengthen their own authority. The Court of Directors argued, "the improvement in education however, to elevate the moral and intellectual condition of the people are those which concern the education of the higher classes, of the persons possessing leisure and influence over the minds of the country men. By raising the standard of education among these classes you would eventually produce a much greater and more beneficial change in the ideas and feelings of the community than you can hope to produce by

10. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 10 March, 1826, Vol. 314, paras 1-5.

11. Baliga, B. S. (ed), *Madura District Gazetteer*, Madras, 1960, pp. 263-264.

acting directly on the more numerous class".[12] By 1830 the Directors concluded that the best result could be obtained by educating the higher orders and then leaving it to them to create a desire for education in the masses. This was called the filtration theory. As this theory gained acceptance, it appeared logical for Governor General Bentinck that the best results could be achieved through English education. Accordingly his government decided to direct all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education to English education alone. As a consequence by 1836 the district and taluq schools were discarded.[13] However, the Central School, that was retained, became the Presidency College and served as the nucleus of the University of Madras.

The filtration theory proved a failure, for knowledge did not reach the masses from the higher orders. Even among the higher classes only a limited number of people took interest in the western system of education. This led the Court of Directors to formulate measures suitable for the diffusion of knowledge to the masses. Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, directed the Government of India in 1854 to create a properly articulated system of education, extending from primary school to university education. The scheme envisaged support to the traditional schools, replacement of the theory of filtration by the theory of mass education, periodical inspection of schools and religious neutrality in matters of education. The Court of Directors observed: "the education which we desire to see extended in India is that which has for its object the diffusion of the improved arts, science, philosophy and literature of Europe, in short of European knowledge ... In any general system of education, the English language should be taught where there is a general demand for it; but such instruction should always be combined

12. Court of Directors, Public Despatch from England, 29 September 1830, paras 5-7.
13. At certain places the taluq schools continued to survive. For instance, at Madurai, supported by the temple funds, the schools were kept functioning.

with a careful attention to the study of the vernacular language of the district with such general instruction as can be conveyed through that language".[14]

Accordingly, the Government implemented a new educational policy. It opened taluq schools for the taluqs and zillah schools for the districts. These schools offered English, Tamil, mathematics, history, economics and geography as the courses of study. The medium of instruction in taluq schools was Tamil, while in higher institutions it was English. Students were permitted to learn English only after they acquired proficiency in Tamil. Text books in Tamil and selections from Tamil poets were brought out with the assistance of Reverend G. U. Pope, a Tamil scholar. In addition support was extended to the traditional schools through a grant-in-aid scheme.

Tamil *vs.* English

Despite a general enthusiasm for English, many an administrator sought to encourage Tamil as the medium of instruction, with English as one of the subjects. It appeared unnatural to offer English as the medium of instruction, for Tamil was the language of the people and knowledge was not likely to reach the man in the field and woman in the kitchen through the medium of English. Besides, it took years to convey something in English to the understanding of the scholars. To begin with certain Tamil medium schools appeared popular. In the taluq school at Vridhachalam the students entertained a preference for Tamil. At Mailaduthurai a promising start was made in Tamil medium. Richards, the Inspector of Schools, wrote: "it was gratifying to me to hear the senior class demonstrate a few propositions of the first Book of Euclid entirely in Tamil. This I hope is the commencement of a new era in the educational history of Southern India". Before long, however, the high optimism

14. Court of Directors, Educational Despatch to the Governor General in Council, 19 July 1854.

entertained by an Englishman vanished in a thin air, when an 'untouchable' was admitted to the school. Except only nine, all the 208 students left it immediately.

The trend of the times worked against Tamil medium schools. The administration felt that if the education of the officials were in Tamil, the amount of knowledge that they would be able to acquire would be much limited and that they would not be able to converse or correspond with their European heads. In the mean time a conviction gained ground among the inhabitants that a knowledge in English was the surest means for an official employment. The parents wanted their children to learn the language of their rulers and not that of their workers. As a result, the Tamil schools went into neglect. In fact a Tamil school that was opened at Cumbum could find not even a single student.[15]

Beginnings of Higher Education

In consequence of the establishment of the University of Madras, the growth of higher education received considerable encouragement. An act of the Legislative Council provided for the creation of the Universities at Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. In 1859 the University of Madras and the Department of Public Instruction came into existence. The new university took over the conduct of examinations in the Madras Medical College, Engineering College and Law College. In 1923 the administration of the university was reorganised. The university received the right to spend money without seeking the approval of the government and the vice chancellor became the executive head.[16]

By 1871 there were only twelve colleges in the Presidency

15. A. J. Arbuthnott, Report on Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency, 1856-1859, pp. 24-26.
16. University of Madras, *History of Higher Education in South India* (1857-1957) Madras, 1957, pp. 51-64.
    Due to the effort of Annamalai Chettiar the Annamalai University was founded in 1929.

of Madras but in ten years their number had doubled. Among the colleges the earliest were the Madras Medical College, Engineering College, Law College, Madras Christian College, the Pachaiyappa's College-all at Madras, St. Joseph's College at Tiruchirapalli, Government College at Kumbakonam, American College at Madurai, St. John's College at Palayamkottai and Scott Christian College at Nagercoil.[17] A medical school that was functioning by 1835 became the Madras Medical College in 1851. A survey school that was working at Madras was developed into the Civil Engineering College in 1857. The Agricultural College came into existence in 1878, the Pachaiyappa's College in 1880 and the Madras Law College in 1891. Most of these institutions accepted the educational rules of the government and became aided institutions.[18]

Since 1900 the country witnessed a phenomenal growth of education. More of schools and colleges came to be founded, though the quality of instruction was not uniformly high. Together with the expansion of education there came steady extension of governmental control. Demoralisation among the teachers and students too was visible from early days. Because of poor pay and bad working condition, the profession did not attract talented teachers. Those who exercised control commanded respect and received high pay, while those who made contributions commanded no respect and languished in poverty. At the same time the examination system worked much to the detriment of the student community. During the period of nationalist agitation, the news papers attacked the rigid attitude of the administration. *The Indian Patriot* lamented: the young men who failed to pass public examination were condemned as lazy and stupid and were thrown out of educational institutions. Year after year thousands of boys were swept out of educational institutions, without any hope.[19]

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-24.
18. *Asylum Almanack and Directory of Madras and South India*, Madras, 1923, pp. 219-220.
19. *The Indian Patriot*, 12 February 1915.

The spread of western education had a mixed effect upon the society. The British evolved an integrated and progressive system of instruction in the place of what was disorganised and stagnant. Secondly, the system placed the advances made by the West in arts and sciences within the reach of the people. Thirdly, English developed into a common language of the elite in the administration, polity and trade. This promoted contact and communication. Fourthly, the system gave adequate importance to professional education, for together with arts, it gave due encouragement to the study of science and technology. However, the new system was not free from defects; for the official encouragement given to the western education came in the way of the development of the traditional system. The new elite in general displayed an apathy for local sciences, local medicines and local arts. As a result many of the achievements of the past came to be neglected. Besides, the new education added to the gulf between the villages and backward sections of the population on the one hand and the towns and the advanced sections on the other. The benefits went to the privileged sections of the society. Added to these, the English had a limited objective. They needed trained clerks to serve them and to control the population. As a result, the bureaucratic traditions came to be strengthened at the expense of popular welfare.

The Press and the Cinema

The rise of the press and the beginning of cinema marked the dawn of an era of mass media, which had a decisive impact upon the social life of the Tamils. The Europeans took the lead in establishing the press and starting publications. The weaklies were the first to appear but subsequently many of them were changed into daily news papers.

In 1785 Richard Johnson founded the *Madras Courier*. This was followed in 1791 by Hugh Boyd's *The Hircarrah*. In 1844 Gazulu Lskshmanarazu Chetti founded the *Crescent*, with a view to defending Hinduism against Christian propaganda. The Europeans started the *Madras Times* in 1860 and the *Madras Mail* in 1868. G. Subramania Aiyer established

The Hindu as a weekly, but it was made a daily in 1889.[20] He also founded a Tamil daily, the *Swadesamitran*. While the Muslims published the *Saiphul Islam* and the *Qaumi Report*, the Dravidian Association published the *Justice* in English and the *Dravidian* in Tamil. Among the other news papers the prominent were the *Hindunesan*, the *Desabaktan*, the *New India* and the *Indian Express*. The press came into three categories: 1) The nationalist press, which supported the Freedom Movement; it included the *Hindunesan* and the *Desabaktan*. 2) The communal press which supported the interests of one community or other; it included the *Saiphul Islam* and the *Justice*. 3) The Anglo Indian press which supported British imperialism; it included the *Madras Times* and the *Madras Mail*.[21]

The cinema reached Madras in 1897, when the Lumiere Brothers sent their agents with films and equipments to demonstrate their achievements in cenematograph show. In 1900 Major Warwick set up the first cinema theatre, the Electric Theatre at Madras, which was later changed into Mount Road post office.[22] Swamikannu Vincent of Tiruchirapalli purchased a cinema equipment from Du Pont, a touring cinema agent from France, and attached a gramaphone with it, so as to produce a synchronised sound effect. He made the first show at Esplanade, Madras in 1909. Seven years later Nataraja Mudaliar of Vellore founded the Indian Film Company at Madras. In 1920 Prakasa founded a studio at Madras. The film industry experienced difficulties because of competition from other regions and censorship instituted by the British.[23] But the film magnates, mostly Telugus and Malayalis, found in the weakness of the Tamils for movie

20. D. Sadasivan, *The March of the Hindu*, Madras 1979, pp. 1-7.
21. All India Newspaper Editors' 24th Conference, Souvenir, New Delhi, December 1977, pp. 7-21.
22. Indian Cinimatograph Committee, 1927-28, Evidence Report, Vol. pp. 359-374.
23. Indian Films Diamond Jubilee, 1919-1972, Special Number, pp. 1-15.

pictures a lucrative and unfailing source of income. In consequence Madras emerged as a centre of film industry. However as Satyan, the well known cine actor of later times, asserted the Tamil pictures were generally of poor quality. The themes and performance were mostly so sex oriented as were calculated to exploit the passions of the youth rather than to impart any moral lesson. Through wine and women, he felt, that the industry extended its corruptive influences to the administration[24]. C. Rajagopalachari compared cinema with liquor and poison for it corrupted the youth and ruined the families. Yet the cinema industry continued to flourish. Among the different regions of India Tamil Nadu recorded the highest exposure rate. This is attributed to an emotional weakness for entertainments as in a tribal society and a deep rooted monotony of life caused by social rigidity.

24. Interview with Satyan, Nellimoodu, 6 June 1969.

Chapter XXIII

STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL EQUALITY

In Tamil Nadu the hisrorical process worked much against the interests of the Tamils. As the result of internal dissentions and external conquests, the invaders, mostly from the northern areas, moved into the land and reduced the Tamils to servitude. The Aryans, the Kannadins, Telugus and Marathas, as they were, emerged as priests, rulers, administrators and zamindars. They learned Tamil language, for it was essential to deal with the population. The conquered Tamils, being deprived of political authority and possession of lands, found themselves reduced to the status of untouchables. They were not recognised as Hindus, for they were neither admitted to the temples nor to the traditional caste system. Nor were they welcome either as priests or as worshippers. On the other hand they were just workers, tenants or criminals, living in the fields that they lost possession of or in the wilderness that sheltered them. The British came and ruled but eager to drain the land of its riches, compromised with the dominant communities. Despite isolated attempts at social reform, the savage customs like untouchability, caste system, torture and infanticide, continued to operate in their rigorous forms. The Tamil communities fell miserable victims to social oppression. Among them came to be regarded the Maravas, the Kallars, the Padayachis, the Nadars, the Paravas, the Pallas and the Parayers. From the past they inherited a system of inequity and injustice that defied comparison.

Oppression of the Untouchables

The princes as well as the priests by virtue of their political and spiritual authority exploited the inhabitants and wrested for themselves all the privileges. They held all high positions in the political and religious establishments, lived in the cities and oppressed the vanguised. Since the fall of the Vijayanagar Empire, the political authority passed from the

Telugus to the Muslims and from the Muslims to the British yet the dominant status of the priestly communities, usually the Brahmins, continued unaffected. The association that they claimed with the world of the celestials and the collusion that they established with the rulers of the land ensured for them a tyrannical sway over the rest of the population. As Srinivas wrote, the Brahmin writers on law "propounded a model of the caste system which placed them at the top and gave them the privilege of declaring the duties of other castes, including the kings".[1] At their direction sati and infanticide were frequently perpetrated. For instance, they presided over the commitment of sati by the forty two wives of the Setupati of Ramnad in 1710[2] and the two wives of Rajah Amar Singh of Thanjavur in 1802. After the women were consumed by the flames, the Brahmins chanted some strange *mantras*, collected the charred bones and threw them into the sea.[3] In response to their wishes, king Martanda Varma (1729-1758) of Travancore seized fifteen children of the Nadar, Ezhava and Parava communities and buried them alive in the different corners of Trivandrum as sacrifice to his deity, Ananda Padmanabha. So great was the veneration that the Brahmin commanded that even the rulers turned to him for guidance. With an imperfect knowledge of Sanskrit and ability to quote some broken *slokas*, he wielded vast influence. "His word is law, his smile confers happiness and salvation, his power with heaven is unlimited, the very dust of his feet is purifying in its nature and efficacy."[4] No wonder the Brahmins led a life at the expense of the society. They lived in *chadurvedimanganams* and *agraharas*-villages which the rulers seized from the common peasants to be given away to them, took free food in the feeding houses attached to the temples, listened to musical concerts and kept the company of

1. Srinivas, M. N. *Social Change in Modern India*. Berkeley, 1966, p.5.
2. Besse. L. *Father Beschi, His Times and His Writings*. Trichinopoly, 1918, pp. 25-29.
3. Madras Council, Political Consultations, 20 May 1802, Vol. 6, pp. 555-6.
4. White House, I. *Lingerings of Light in a Dark Land*, London, 1873. p. 215.

the *devadasis* at will. After the establishment of the British rule, they compromised with imperialism and joined the service of the aliens. When the spiritual leaders of the society readily agreed to serve imperialism, the British encountered no obstacle to the consolidation of their influence. Though they constituted just three per cent of the population, they occupied most of the positions open to the Tamils under the British administration. Secure in their dominant status, they looked down the Tamils with hatred and contemptuously referred to the inhabittants as *mlechas* and considered Tamil as the language of the *mlechas*.[5]

Closely associated with the princes and the priests were the caste Hindus. Land lords and public servants, they held possession of the fertile lands wrested from the possession of native Tamils and served in the administrative, military and religious establishments. They were village officials, revenue servants and armed men. The rulers, whether they were the locals or the foreigners, relied upon them for the exercise of their authority. In consequence the caste Hindus utilised their privileged position to obtain exemption from taxation overtly as well as covertly and to oppress the unfortunate sections of the society.

The paradox of the glory of the culture in the land was that it condemned the vast majority of the population as untouchables. Referred to as Dravidas or Adi Dravidas, they were the sons of the soil and the real Tamils. However, by a gradual yet ruthless process of violence and fraud, the caste Hindus deprived them of their possessions and reduced them to the status of landless tenants. With no productive land to till, no proper habitat to live, no cloth to wear and no food to eat, they led a miserable existence just to support the rulers, the Brahmins and the caste Hindus. Despite the services they did, they were treated as untouchables and subjected to exactions. They were required to work for

5. Harrison, S. *India-the Most Dangerous Decades*, 1960, p. 129.

the state with no compensation being paid, to cultivate the fields of the land lords, to pay taxes for their huts, animals and birds, to offer presents to the caste Hindus and to keep away from the temples, the public streets and the high caste localities.[6] Any infringement of these customs invited the severest retribution. The public servants as well as the caste Hindus practised torture in its worst forms. The usual methods included detention of a victim in public buildings or private houses for days together, with no food being served. He was tied by ropes with head and feet together, a large stone was placed upon his back, and he was kept exposed to the burning sun, subjected to kicking and flogging. It was a usual sight to see wretched inhabitants being kept in rows in such a pitiable state during these times.

The other forms of torture appeared more repressive. The leg of the victim was tied to a tree as high as possible so as to force him to support himself only on one leg in the hot sun, while a heavy stone was placed over the head. He was kept suspended from a tree and was dipped in the well or river till he was partly suffocated or was fully suffocated to death. The chilly powder was applied to the eyes or private parts, causing burning pain. At times milk hedge was poured into the eyes for making him blind. A scratching insect was placed on to the hollow of the navel with a coconut shell placed over it so that it would bore in and generate unbearable pain. Apart from these, an instrument called the *kittie* was applied. By it the fingers were gradually bent backward towards the back of the hand until the poor sufferer was required to endure the most excruciating pain.[7] *Kazhuku* was a pointed rod, made of iron or wood. A person who was compelled to sit on it was pressed down and done to death. These atrocities, most ruthlessly carried out, with no discrimination

6. Hutton, J. H. *Caste in India*, Bombay, 1963, p. 198.
7. Report of the Commissioners for the Investigation of Alleged cases of Torture in the Madras Presidency, 1955, Madras, pp. 7-28.

being made on basis of age or sex, fell heavily on the Tamils, for they supplied the untouchables.[8] The submissive character of the common people, the tyrannical attitude of the influencial communities and the collusion of the administration rendered such a situation possible.

Ordeals of the Nadars

The Nadars constituted one of the populous communities of South India. Known as the Shantrar, Shantore, Nadazhvar and Shanar, they were a peasant community with learned men, warriors, merchants and toddy tappers in their fold. It is widely believed that the Raja Kshatriyas, who ruled over Madurai Country as the Pandyas, formed one of their sub sects. Two inscriptions at Kalladaikurichi suggest that in medieval times the Nadars served as administrators and accountants both in Chera and Pandya countries.[9] If the references found in the Mahavamsa and the names of the persons who served in the principalities of Kerala are an indication, the Nadar warriors fought under the command of Kulasekhara Pandya against the powers of Lanka and under Martanda Varma against Quilon. Nevertheless, in later periods the Nadars cherished a memory of vanished glory and the ruins found in their early settlements substantiated this tradition.[10]

The Muslim and Telugu conquests administered a serious blow to the glory of the Nadars. A dominant community and a Tamil power, they had to bear the brunt of foreign aggression. As the resistance to the Afghans appeared futile, they evacuated Madurai and moved to places like Kamudi,

8. Torture Commission Report, Vol. I, Appendix, No. 12.
9. Kalladaikurichi Inscriptions, No. 325/1916, 7 February, 1380 and 24 March 1416.
10. R. L. Hardgrave in his *The Nadars of Tamilnad* (pp. 97-104) asserts that the Nadars settled in Sivakasi and other towns in the 19th century. But local traditions in Trivandrum and palm leaf records in Nellikkakuzhi establish that several Nadar families emigrated from Sivakasi and settled in the coastal areas of Travancore in the 17th century.

Chinnamanur, Manad, Vannikulam, Palayampatti and Tenkasi. One of the latter chieftains, Hari Kesari Parakrama Pandyan, went on a pilgrimage to Kasi and on his return installed a *Sivalinga* at a village, which in subsequent times grew into a flourishing Nadar settlement, called Sivakasi.[11] As the Pandyas declined in power, the Muslims consolidated their authority and established the Madurai Sultanate The Madurai Sultans fought repeated wars against the Tamil powers and followed a policy of repression against the inhabitants.

However, the forces of Vijayanagar led by Kumara Kampana over-ran Madurai and destroyed the Sultanate. The Pandyas thereupon made a determined bid to regain their tarnished glory. The five chieftains called Pancha Thiruvazhuthi Nadakkal fought a major battle at Kayattar against the forces of Vijayanagar, led by Visvanatha Nayaka, but were defeated. As a result, the Nayaks consolidated their authority in Madurai Country. During the reign of Thirumala Nayaka, the armies of Mysore and Bijapur made frequent incursions into the far South. The Setupatis of Ramanathapuram too organised resistance against the Nayak authority. Taking advantage of this opportunity and seeking to re-assert their influence, the Nadars organised a formidable rebellion under their able leader, Kumara Vira Martanda Nadar. But the Nayaks through protracted struggle suppressed the insurgents.

The collapse of this rebellion proved disastrous to the defiant Tamils. Ably assisted by the Mudaliars and the Vellalars, the Nayaks burnt down the houses, occupied the villages, and rounded up the families. Many of them were massacred or sold away as slaves. About 800 Nadars of Kayalpattinam and 100 Nadars of Kizhkarai, who were handed over to the Muslims to be taken by their boats and thrown into the mid sea, embraced Islam and thereby escaped death. Overtaken by panic, the survivors escaped to remote

11. Kumaraswamy, *Nadar Mannarum Nayikka Mannarum*, pp. 103-109 and *Shantore Manu* p. 116.

areas. Towards Tiruchendur lay an uninviting tract, with poor soil and scanty rain fall. Many of them moved into these inhospitable lands, tapped toddy from the palm trees and made a precarious living. In fact the toddy tapping age represented a dark period in the history of the Nadars. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, a few families from Sivakasi moved to the thick jungles of Trivandrum. Many of them died of malaria fever. Yet they cleared the forests, raised plantain and coconut trees and established flourishing settlements. Several of the Nadar families of Neyyattinkara and Trivandrum cherish even today memories of their Sivakasi ancestry.[12] Many of the families escaped to Arcot, Salem, Coimbatore and Mysore and for fear of identification assumed the titles of Gramini, Chetti, Pillai and the like. The conquest of the Carnatic by the Mughals led to the ascendancy of the Wallajahs, yet the persecution of the Nadars continued unabated under the Telugu poligars. However, as the situation improved and as the British gave law and order to the land, the Nadars took to cultivation, industry and trade with a sense of security. By the beginning of the nineteenth century many of them returned to their ancestral towns of Sivakasi, Kamudi, Virudampatti and Madurai.

Despite the developments in the political scene, the Nadars found their task of gaining social equality quite onerous. They continued to suffer discrimination in Travancore and Tamil Nadu. Traditionally called Venad, the territory extending from Kanyakumari to Kollam, formed an integral part of the Tamil home land. However, the princes of Venad planted Nair

12. A *Villupattu* on the Nadar settlements, Palm leaves, Nellikkakuzhi, narrates the migration of families, four Nadar, one Ezhava and one Palla, accompanied by their servants to the uninhabited forest region near Trivandrum. As they were afflicted with fever, they went back to Sivakasi, worshipped at the Chamundi Temple, returned with *prasadam* and founded a new Kali temple at Kazhiyoor. When they converted the area into a garden land, the Nairs in the service of the Raja of Travancore raided Nellikkakuzhi but three of them were killed and the rest were driven off.

settlements in this region. They granted the fertile lands taken from the Tamils and in return the Nairs sent young girls to the princes, whenever the latter encamped in the nearby areas. These Nair houses were referred to *ammavidus*, homes of princely concubines. With the expansion of Venad to the north and the invasion of Malabar by Mysore, this kingdom lost its Tamil identity. The Nairs, migrating from the northern region, settled in large number in the southern area, replaced the Tamils in the armed forces, entered the revenue establishments, associated themselves with the Brahmins in the temples and emerged as a ruling class. The Tamils continued to till the fields but found their lands transferred to the ownership of Brahmin *mutts* and Nair *amma vidus* through changes in records of the Nair controlled administration. No wonder, the sons of the soil found themselves reduced to the status of landless tenants.

The Tamils of South Travancore and other 'untouchables' particularly the Ezhavas of North Travancore were required to support an obnoxious system, imposed upon them by the princes, the Nairs and the Brahmins. While the Nairs and the Brahmins were to pay no taxes, the Nadars were subjected to oppressive exactions. They were forced to work for the princes in the streets and water courses, for the Nairs in their fields and for the Brahmins in the temple premises. By force and violence they were required to cut roads, repair water courses and construct public buildings. They had to feed the temple elephants and cultivate temple lands. Despite their devoted service to their oppressive tyrants, they received neither any compensation nor any consolation. They were ruthlessly kept out of public services, public roads, public wells and places of worship. They could wear no cloth above the waist, hold no umbrella and use no chappals. The Nadar women were strictly prohibited from wearing any scarf or upper cloth and from carrying pots of water on the hip, as the Nair women did. They were compelled to keep the upper portions of their bodies bare not only as a token of submission but also for indentification of their status as 'untouchables'. Every day both men

and women were to stand at a distance with their hands folded and loin cloths tied around the waist and to procrastinate before the high caste masters till they saw a nod as permission to proceed with a work. Any violation of these customary practices or failure to surrender to the arbitrary exactions invited ruthless reprisal. The Nairs attacked their victims, inflicted upon them the most inhuman atrocities and even tortured them to death. If any 'untouchable' dared to go near a Nair, he was immediately cut down.[13] The administration as well as the judiciary being corrupt and criminal, no complaint either against exaction or against oppression could be made. As Colonel Munro, Resident at Trivandrum, wrote on March 7, 1818: "No description can produce an adequate impression of the tyranny, corruption and abuses of the system full of activity and energy in everything mischievous, oppressive and infamous, but slow and dilatory to effect any purpose of humanity, mercy and justice... On the part of the people, complaint was useless, remedy was hopeless, they had only one remedy and that was bribery."[14]

The Nadar Movement

In this period of their existence there emerged a determination among the Nadars to resist the social tyranny. To begin with their struggle for emancipation was directed against forced labour and upper cloth restriction, subsequently it turned into temple entry agitation and ultimately it merged with the Self Respect and Tamil Integration movements. In

13. Samuel Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore*, London, 1883, p. 291.

14. Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, VI, Political, London, 1832, Appendix p. 276.

The Kalladaikurichi Inscriptions make it clear that the caste Hindus considered it as their right to kill at their will members of lower communities. The rulers did not interfere in the commitment of such crimes. In 1453 A.D. the Tirunelveli Vellalars decided to kill 23 Nadars for some unspecified offence against them. (Kallidaikurichi Inscriptions No. 325/1916 dated 7 February 1380 and 24 March 1416.)

fact this struggle which lasted for one and a half centuries heralded the movements, aimed at social liberation in other areas of India. Different factors contributed to this movement. As agony and distress overtook them, the Nadars recalled their glory of the past. John Abbes rightly observed: these people "although in an oppressed and degraded condition, had many proud references to a noble ancestry". This memory was so deep rooted that they cherished a conviction that their unfortunate situation could be reversed.[15] There began to appear several *pandits* who contributed to an intellectual stir. A. Vedakan, C. Masilamani, Vedamanikkam, Sivagurunathan and Pakyanathan were a few among these notable worthies. They composed verses and wrote books in Tamil, attacking the social inequities. Before long this intellectual stir spread from South Travancore to Madurai Country. S. Winfred published his well known work *Shandror Kula Marapu Kattala* in 1874, followed by Samuel Sargunar's *Dravida Kshatriays*. These works traced the history of the Nadars to a noble ancestry. After a glorious period of 4000 years, the Pandyas, their ancestors suffered defeat at the hands of the Telugu Naidus in the sixteenth century, lost their possessions and fled to the dreary lands to lead a life in misery. No wonder the Nadars drew inspiration from the tradition of their glorious past. Secondly, the social organisations carried a message of equality and progress. In 1809 the Protestants founded a church at Mylady in South Travancore. Following this many of the Tamils embraced Christianity and chapels and schools sprung up. To the Christian Missions the oppressive system that was enforced upon their people, appeared alien to their faith. They upheld the cause of the converts. In the mean time Muthukutty Swamigal (1809-1851) founded the Society for the Establishment of Equality. Claiming himself as the incarnation of Vishnu, he carried on a crusade against the distinctions imposed upon the society by the caste Hindus. In response to his call several Nadars began to wear turbans as mark of royalty, a 'sacred thread'

15. John Abbes, *Twenty Two Years, Missionary Experience in Travancore*, London, 1870, p. 151.

and tuft as the Brahmins did and travelled in palanquins as the caste Hindu nobles did. However, his mission was cut short as he was poisoned to death.[16] Added to these, the wealth and education gained by the Nadars imparted in them a growing sense of self confidence. Through cultivation and trade, they earned wealth and from the institutions founded by the Christian Missions, they received education. The rich and educated people refused to compromise with an intolerable system.

The Nadars launched their struggle for social equality with a decision to defy established traditions and imposed restrictions. By 1820 the men refused to render any free labour to the rulers and the Nairs while the women decided to violate the Nair women's monopoly of the scarf. This form of struggle appeared as symbolic as the American colonists' decision to boycott tea and Indian nationalists' move to pick up salt but the consequences were of considerable magnitude. It represented the determination of an oppressed people to assert a status of social equality.

In May 1822 the Nairs attacked the Nadars for violating the custom. They stripped the Nadar women of the upper clothes in the market places, assaulted the men for refusing to do work for them, burnt down the chapels and schools and raided the private houses. In 1828 rioting broke out at many places particularly Neyyattinkara, Eraniel and Padmanabhapuram and several people were killed. Among the Nadars who lost their lives was Vedamanikkam, a much respected leader of Attur. Armed with deadly weapons and supported by the administrators, the Nairs roamed about, committed outrages and instituted a reign of terror. The inhabitants appealed to the ruler of the state for protection but the administration manned by the Nairs refused any succour. To add to the insult, the Nair officials instituted an enquiry against the Nadars and filed false cases against them, char-

16. Yesudas, R. N., *A People's Revolt in Travancore*, Trivandrum, 1975, p. 131-5.

ging them with rioting and murder. Among the arrested, fourteen Christians were seen chained, with their legs dreadfully swollen by irons, paraded through the streets of Attur and flogged constantly with rattans [17] Now Rani Parvati Bai (1815-1829), one of the most scandalous of the women who ruled over Travancore, came out with a proclamation. "As it is not reasonable on the part of Shanar women to wear clothes over their breasts, they are required to abstain in future from covering the upper part of their body."[18]

As this abnoxious proclamation gave no consolation to the victims of social injustice, the struggle continued unabated. The Nadar women refused to accept the iniquitous proclamation issued by a fellow woman. Eager to avert blood shed, the missionary women devised a loose jacket but it did not satisfy the pride of Nadar women. To the annoyment of the Nairs they now appeared in multi coloured upper clothes and moved about freely. In consequence serious rioting broke out in October 1858 at Arumanoor and Amaravila and it spread southward. The Nairs occupied the Nadar habitats, raided the houses and seized men and women. The police extended their support to the culprits, for they arrested the innocent victims, tortured them and threw them into prisons. Many escaped to the east and settled in Tirunelveli eager to avert a doom. As the conflagration spread and death toll mounted, Diwan Madhava Rao paid a visit to the centres of disaffection. The Nadars waited on him to make a representation but were beaten up and driven off. On his return to Trivandrum this reactionary administrator issued a proclamation directing the Nadars to adhere to the usage hither to observed by their women of not covering the body with an upper cloth as the Nair women did.[19]

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 126-144.

18. Augur C. M., *Church History of Travancore*, Madras, 1903, p. 850.

19. Nagam Aiya, (ed.) *The Travancore State Manual*, Vol. I, Trivandrum, 1906, p. 525.

This proclamation so much inflamed the wrath of the Nadars that they refused to surrender. As more of disturbances broke out there came clashes at Parassala, Kaliakkavila and Neyyoor. Supported by Nair Brigade, the Nairs and the Vellalas seized Nadars at Nagercoil, tied them up at market places, abused women and set fire to the chapels. The agitated Nadars drew volunteers from Tirunelveli, collected arms, looted the Kottar bazaar and attacked the Nair and Vellala houses. In the rioting that followed many died at Balaramapuram, Neyyattinkara, Kuzhithurai, Neyyoor, Mylady and Aramboly.

As the panic spread and as the state government found the situation going out of control, the Christian missionaries presented a joint petition to the Madras Council, requesting intervention. They complained that because of police atrocity, forcible detention of people and barbarous treatment of victims, life had become unbearable in that part of the world.[20] Charles Trevelyan, the Governor of Madras, upheld the cause of the Tamils and condemned the barbarious policy of the Maharaja of Travancore as unsuited to the times and unworthy of an enlightened prince. He wrote: "I have seldom met with a case, in which not only truth and justice, but every feeling of our common humanity are so entirely on one side. The whole civilized world cry shame upon us, if we did not make a firm stand on such an occasion."[21] Now finding the tide going against him, prince Martanda Varma (1847-60) yielded to reason and issued a proclamation on 26 July 1859 abolishing the restrictions against the covering of the upper parts of the persons of Nadar women, with a reservation that they should not imitate the caste Hindus in matters of dress.[22] Since then the Nadars dressed as they liked and refused to render any

20. Petition by C.M.S. Missionaries, dated 26 July 1855, Copies of Official Papers, pp. 29-31.
21. Nagam Aiya, *Travancore State Manual*, Vol. I, p. 526.
22. *The Land of Charity. An Account of Travancore and its Devil Worship*, New York, 1870, p. 350.

service either to the princes or to the Nairs without receiving compensation. This marked a victory for the Tamils of Travancore, though the caste Hindu domination continued in the political and economic spheres.

The Temple Entry Agitation marked the second stage of the Nadars' struggle for social equality. Though they were required to do free labour to the Brahmins, to feed the temple elephants and to pay taxes to support the temples they were not recognised as Hindus, for they were disallowed from going to the deities for worship. In the temple at Kumaracoil, near Nagercoil, it was the usual custom during festivals for the caste Hindu devotees to walk in the fire pit, claiming divine powers. Vellayan Nadar decided to challenge this high caste pretension. After prayers and *poojas*, he jumped into a large fire pit and danced in the flames for half an hour much to the envy of the oppressors. Emerging out of the pit and followed by 12,000 Nadar devotees, he entered the temple. The attempt made by the Nairs and the police to prevent their entry led to rioting, in which 150 people died.[23] The exploits of the devotees represented a desperate bid on their part to regain a status for their exploited people.

Spread of the Movement

From Travancore the movement spread to Tamil Nadu. There always existed an intimate association between the Nadars of Travancore and those of Tamil Nadu. In times of trouble they rendered mutual aid and shared the ordeals in common. Depending upon the vicissitudes in their fortunes, they freely moved across the frontiers. The courage with which the oppressed people presented a challenge to the tyrannical system and the break through that they achieved exerted hope among the fellow victims of oppression.

The movement in Tamil Nadu, as in Travancore, assumed

23. Kochukrishnan Nadar, K., *Nadar History*, Nellikkakuzhi, 1956, pp. 196-200.

two forms. The more radical among the oppressed sought to gain a social identity through other religions, while the more conservative through Hinduism itself. During these days religion presented the ladder for progress, for it ensured a status in the traditional caste system and that in turn decided the nature of political influence and the mode of living. Finding Hinduism blocked by the communities, which claimed a higher status, many of the untouchables sought progress through other religions, particularly Islam and Christianity. This led to the spread of these religions in the Tamil districts. The untouchables refused to assert that this process represented conversion, for they were out castes and their presence caused pollution. Only when Islam and Christianity presented challenges, they appeared acceptable as the devotees, though not as priests. Nevertheless most of the Nadars made a determined effort for a gate crash into Hinduism.

Accordingly they claimed a Rajput descent, called themselves Kshatriyas, opened Kshatriya *vidya salas* (schools), employed palanquins for their marriages and decided to enter the temples for worship. By 1870 the mounting unrest assumed serious proportions. They made an attempt to enter the Temple at Tiruchendur but the Brahmins and the Vellalas resisted. Led by Mooka Nadar they entered the Great Temple at Madurai in 1874 and worshipped goddess, Minakshi. Equipped with torches and drums, they in 1879 marched in procession to the Sundareswara Temple at Kamudi and garlanded the deity. In 1896 they assembled at the Siva Temple of Sivakasi to force their entry, but for fear of 'pollution', it was closed for worship. The frequent violations of established traditions, so daringly attempted by the Nadars, had their natural impact on the fellow people in misery. Different communities, though were not prepared to concede any concessions to others which they considered as lower, began to take an interest. As Stevenson wrote from Tirunelveli in 1888: "Every where the lower castes are asserting themselves, while still denying the caste below them the right which

they themselves claim."[24]

However, the communities which claimed a higher status were not prepared to stand as idle spectators to the emerging situation. The Maravas and the Vellalas in particular were afraid that the Nadars, whom they considered as low, would gain ascendancy over them. The consequent jealousy between communities excited tension and led to frequent clashes. Disturbances broke out, when the Nadars decided to worship at Tiruchendur, Sivakasi and Kamudi. Ten people died as the result of clashes in Kalugumalai. In the course of a serious riot in Sivakasi the Nadars destroyed the houses of the Maravas but the latter prepared for revenge. As the attack appeared imminent, the inhabitants of the town sought protection from Scott, the District Magistrate of Tirunelveli, but failed because of intrigues by the officials who were in collusion. On 6th June, 1899 the Maravas, 5000 strong, equipped with fire arms and led by Vellaiya Tevar, marched on Sivakasi.[25] As no administrative protection came the Nadars erected barricades and prepared themselves for defence. Armed men took their position on the top of buildings, while the women collected chilly powder to be thrown into the eyes of the raiders. The Maravas appeared on the scene and attacked the Nadar settlements. There followed a savage battle for two hours. Twenty five people died and 886 houses were destroyed. The unexpected resistance threw the raiders into bewilderment. Failing to sack Sivakasi, they retreated, carrying their dead in the carts that they brought to haul away the loot. Greatly humiliated, the Maravas appeared determined to retrieve their tarnished prestige. Bands of them roamed about, ravaging the villages in Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Travancore. In June 1899 a crowd of 2000 armed men raided the Nadar villages of Chinniapuram and Kottayur, burned down 200 houses and killed three. As the Maravas won the support of

24. Judicial Department, Madras G. O. 2017-18, 12 December 1899, Confidential, No: 176.

25. *The Madras Mail*, Madras, 1 July 1899,

Kallars, Virudhunagar and Aruppukkottai too were threatened.[26]

Confronted with an alarming situation, the British employed troops for the suppression of riots. H. V. Firth in command of the Madras Infantry intercepted the armed gangs and dispersed them. At Alangulam near Tirunelveli the troops chased 700 rioters and took thirty eight as prisoners. Near Palayamkottai they found 5000 rioters taking to heels. At Neelithanallur another gang was dispersed.[27] Inspite of the deployment of the forces, twenty three Nadars were killed, 150 villages were raided and more than 2000 houses were destroyed in subsequent riots.[28] As the result of judicial proceedings seven rioters were sentenced to death and 545 were convicted. The news paper, *The Hindu*, as could be understood, attributed the disturbances to the violation of custom by the Nadars.[29] Yet what was evident was that a determined endeavour made by one community among the 'untouchables' was countered by another with equal vehemence. This contradiction was attributed to the machinations of the communities, which had their vested interests.[30]

26. Lord Curzon, the Governor General (1899-1905) condemned the local administration headed by Scott for its failure. He wrote: "It appears to the Governor General in Council that the district officials had ample warning of what was likely to happen, and that the acts of wholesale murder, bloodshed and arson which were committed in June might have been prevented or at least largely mitigated, but for the incompetence and indifference of these officials. (Judicial Department, 9 July 1900, G. O. 949-951, Confidential No. 96.)
27. Judicial Department, Madras, 7 July 1899, No. 1071.
28. Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1901-1902, p. 1.
29. *The Hindu*, Madras, 10 June 1899, Editorial.
30. Judicial Department, Madras, 12 December 1899, G.O. 2017-18 and Confidential No. 176.

Chapter XXIV

RISE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

By the mid-nineteenth century Tamil Nadu, spotted with villages and farms, presented the appearance of a society of peasants and workers. Madurai had extensive fortifications, large avenue trees and neglected mantapas, but it concealed in its bosom the memories of a suppressed glory. Madras emerged as the capital of the Presidency. With two and a half lakhs of people in 1800, it was one of the major cities of the world. Yet it was exceedingly unlike a modern city. The waves of the moonsoon sea broke so close to the residential areas that they spread panic among the inhabitants. The Europeans had their shops, taverns and ball rooms in Fort St. George but slowly they extended them along the Mount Road. The nearby villages supplied fish, meat, fruits and grain for the support of the white population. Crabs and oysters reached from the Ennore or Pulicat and turkeys and geese from Karaikal or Sadras.[1]

Prices of articles fluctuated from season to season, depending upon supply and demand. A few banking institutions functioned but their resources were limited. Among them were the Carnatic Bank, the Madras Bank and the Asiatic Bank, all owned by the Europeans. The coins were of a wide variety, for by 1815 there were in circulation some seventy two varieties of gold coins, sixty varieties of silver coins and twenty five varieties of copper coins. Naturally this gave scope for confusion as well as corruption in commercial transactions. However in 1818 the rupee was made the coin of account. Roads were few and the existing ones were dusty and irregular. The major roads connected Madras with Bangalore in the west and Nagercoil in the south. Military roads were developed

1. Madras Council, Public Consultations, Madras, 7 September 1847, Letter No. 29.

across the jungles because of wars and rebellions. Between 1830 and 1837 tram ways and railways made their appearance. By 1860 plans were formulated for the extension of the railway system from Madurai to Tutukudi and to Quilon.[2] The political stability and communication system promoted the growth of trade and the towns. Because of official patronage, the western system of education gained ground, but its benefit went by and large to the town dwellers and 'higher' communities.

The society was divided into four classes. The ruling class consisted of the Europeans and the Anglo-Indians. They formed a microscopic minority, yet they entrenched themselves in administration and industry. They lived in luxury, excited terror among the people and behaved with arrogance. Because of their superiority complex, they contemptuously referred to the local people as 'Indians' and even as 'Indian dogs'. Next in order, there came the Brahmin elite. By virtue of their spritual authority and service to European masters, they wielded considerable influence upon the society. Taking advantage of the western system of education, they entered the service of the English as clerks and assistants. This dual role both in the society as well as in the administration contributed to the stabilisation of their influence. Proud of their status, they contemptuously referred to the other sections of the people as 'Sudras'. Thirdly there came the *savarnas* or the caste Hindus. Among them were the zamindars, mirasdars, headmen, industrialists, traders and lawyers. Mostly belonging to the Vellala and Telugu communities, they too led a life of ease and comfort at the expense of the people, who were referred as the Dravidas or Adi Dravidas. Mostly they lived in the cities and towns. Elsewhere in the country, in the villages the toiling masses continued to lead a miserable existence. As it was the situation later, these wretched inhabitants lived in their poor huts, worked in the hot sun as well as in the moon light, starved for the most part of the

2. Selection from Old Records, Formation of Railways, Letter No. 4, dated 11 July 1860.

year, yet were subjected to constant harrassment by land lords, revenue officials and village headmen. Famine and epidemic, which came repeatedly carried away a large proportion of the population year after year. Murder, high way robbery, house breaking and theaft were very common. The records of the period refer to the people abandoning their normal work, "retiring to their houses before dark and spending the night in vigil". People went to the market places well armed. The *kavalkars* detected crimes at times and the judges sent the criminals to jails, but the prisoners quarrelled among themselves, when separate spaces were not allotted for different castes. As a matter of course, most of the crimes went undetected and unpunished, either because of administrative inaction or official collusion. As a result grave crimes like robbery and murder were frequently committed. Caste system and untouchability imposed serious limitations upon social mobility and economic progress.[3]

In fact a three fold system of oppression and exploitation created an atmosphere of political unrest and social conflict. The Europeans came in the way of the Brahmins, the Brahmins in the way of the caste Hindus and the caste Hindus in the way of the 'untouchable' communities. A combination of these factors rendered it essential for the people to struggle for political freedom and social liberation. It was in the midst of these stresses and strains in the polity and the society that the people developed a political awakening.

Signs of Unrest

The Tamils fought a major struggle against the English in 1800-1801 for the liberation of the country but suffered a serious defeat. Yet because of the organised character of this Rebellion, the British took nearly a decade to suppress it. Fear of continued outbreaks so much haunted the English that they continued to station forces in areas of disaffection for long. In 1804 Dasen, a leader of the Pallar community, claimed

3. N. Dodwell, *Report on Madras Records*, pp. 35-70.

divine authority to liberate the country from foreign yoke. Assuming the title Ramaswami, he conferred similar titles upon his followers, visited the villages of Coimbatore and Salem, directed the people to pay no taxes and set 6th June 1804 (25th Vaikasi) as the liberation day. With him were associated the peasants, who served under Gopala Nayak, Marudu Pandyan and Dhoondaji Waug in the past. The rebels collected and stored in the jungles large quantities of match locks, pistols and swords. But the English detected the gathering storm, seized the rebels and checked the outbreak.[4] Since then, there broke out serious disturbances in Dindigul and Vellore, but they too were quelled.

In 1841 the peasants of South Arcot waged an agitation against the imposition of taxes on residential areas and fallow lands. At Tirucoilur and Tiruvannamalai they threw down the *pattas*, issued by the revenue officials, and demonstrated. When Collector Ashton appeared at Chaitput, they gathered in strength, threw sand at him and chased him out of his *cutchery*. The Collector made his escape to an indigo factory but the agitators surrounded him and forced him to withdraw the objectionable levies.[5]

In 1857 the Great Rebellion broke out and spread in North India. The Muslims of Madras circulated among the inhabitants copies of proclamations and letters, urging the Nizam of Hyderabad to declare a holy war against the English. Signs of disaffection were noticed in the Eighth Light Cavalry, sationed at Madras, but it was disarmed.[6] Subsequently in 1859 when the citizens of Madras presented a farewell address to Governor Trevelyan, they made a strong plea for the introduction of self government. But they received an unexpected reply:

4. Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, Madras, March 1804, Vol. 132, pp. 805-812.
5. Mr. Dent, Report on the Disturbances in South Arcot District, 1841, pp. 10-11.
6. B. S. Baliga, *Studies in Madras Administration*, Madras, 1961, pp. 1-4.

Qualify yourselves for representative institutions and they will be sure to come in good time. You are united under the common protection of the British Crown with a free people who have never grudged to others a participation in the political advantages which they themselves enjoy. The real delay is on your part. Cultivate the literature of England which is instinct with the spirit of self government. Learn by our example how to work representative institutions, for this is by no means an easy task and several famous nations have failed in this attempt. Above all things, strive to attain to a high moral standard. Public morality without which national government is impossible is only the aggregate of each man's individual character. Truth, justice, scrupulous fidelity to engagements, habitual preference to public to private interests, are the qualities which elevate a nation and enable to conduct its affairs with advantage."[7] This suggestion gave much scope for reflection, but appeared in line with an advice given by an enlightened despot from his high pedestal to his enslaved people. Though the British created municipalities and district boards with representation for the people, they were not prepared to concede to demands for any political change of consequence.

Causes of Unrest

The political and economic restrictions that were centred on imperialism, caused widepsread misery and unrest in the land. The English, strangers to the Tamils, different in race, colour and culture, gained possession of the country through violence and exercised their sway by force. Despite their long rule, they failed to identify themselves with the inhabitants of the land or to gain their confidence. The only link that sustained the contact between the respective positions of the rulers and the ruled was force. But this kind of relation appeared so unnatural that the Tamils were not prepared to accept it for long.

7. B. S. Baliga, *Madras in the Struggle for Independence*, Madras, 1957, p. 3

As the rulers of the land, the English followed a policy of racial discrimination against the inhabitants. They gave no representation to the Tamils on the government; instead they held the monopoly of political authority. Further, they excluded the sons of the soil from all high offices, for they were reserved for the Europeans. Arrogant of power, they ill-treated the Tamils. In the administration, in the markets, on the roads and on the trains, they looked them down with contempt, flogged them at will, fired upon them on the slightest provocation and arrested them on flimsy grounds. When an English man rode along, his local aids whipped and drove away the pedestrians, who came across. The presence as well as the movement of the white men spread terror in the country.[8]

The western ways and habits, that the English men represented in the country, appeared abnoxious to the Tamils. They imported their customs and promoted their sciences but neglected the local arts and languages. *Kalameham* published from Karaikal, lamented: "the British government brought with it poverty, brandy bottles, shown civilization and false articles. Some hail development of science while the wise deplore the decadence of art. Hat, boot, spoon, fork, beaf and pork spread in the land, while wisdom and peace left."[9] The *Vijaya Vikatan*, published from Madras, condemned the neglect of Tamil language. It deplored: "The English gave a blow to the language of Agastya-Tamil, for promoting their own language."[10] In fact the preference given to an alien culture in this land gave a rude shock to the Tamils, who believed in their own cultural glory.

The taxes that were levied upon the people were not only numerous but also oppressive. Among them the land tax, the salt tax and the income tax excited widespread resent-

8. *Andhra Patrika*, Madras, 31 August 1929.
9. *Kalameham*, Karaikal, 23 September 1912.
10. *Vijaya Vikatan*, Madras, 2 September 1911.

ment. The land revenue policy of the British was marked by exaction and corruption. As the incidence of taxation worked high, the peasants found it impossible to comply with public demand. Whether the land yielded or not, the tenants were forced quite arbitrarily to pay the customary dues. In the event of any default, they were subjected to outrages and confiscation. The terror that attended the proceedings reduced the inhabitants to starvation and caused frequent famines.[11] This sad situation assumed more serious proportions, when the English imposed more taxes, particularly the salt tax and the income tax. The people condemned the salt tax as the most unjust and cruel of all taxes, as it hit even the poorest in the society and denounced the income tax as a levy imposed for the benefit of the alien administrators. Inspite of the ordeals caused to the people the English wasted the exacted collections on extravagance high salary to their white servants and military undertakings.[12]

In the mean time the mercantile policy of the English ruined the traditional industries. On the advent of the Europeans, the Tamil Country was noted for the finest varieties of calico. But after the establishment of their political authority, the people were required to export cotton to England, to purchase textile products and to pay taxes on looms. As a result the weaving industries and the auxiliary industries like dyeing were ruined and weavers were thrown out of employment. Also the administration permitted the Europeans to entrench themselves in industries, plantations and trade. They granted

11. *Swadesamitran*, Madras, 30 August 1907.
When the assessments were increased in all districts, they were not made applicable to Nilgiris, where the whites held vast plantations.

12. *Vartaka Mitran*, Madras, 26 December 1920.
The British rulers remitted to England what were called home charges-interest on public investments, loans, furloughs, pensions to officers and expenses on administrative establishments. (Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. 2, pp. 282-283.)

them concessions in the working of railways, in the establishment of banks, in the development of plantations and the like. To sustain their industries the rulers promoted the cultivation of cash crops, despite the frequent shortages of food products. Faced with destructive competition, the weavers demanded a protective levy, but this was not conceded. As the drain of the resources continued unabated, the news papers deplored that the British destroyed the arts and crafts and drove the people to misery, disease and death [13] *The Hindunesan* denounced the British for destroying the cotton industry, preventing the growth of iron industry, depleting the cattle wealth and neglecting agriculture. The English on the otherhand attributed the widespread poverty of the Tamils to the other worldly attitude of the Indians, traditionalism, caste system and isolation from the other peoples of the world.[14]

Certain laws and practices introduced by the English were not only discriminatory but were calculated to hurt the self respect of the communities. The forest laws prevented the villages from letting their sheep and cattle for grazing on public lands. The Criminal Tribes Act imposed stringent restrictions upon the movements of the Kallars and the Kuravas. The Tamils who were employed in the European industries and plantations, referred to as *coolies*, were subjected to crude treatment and paid meagre wages. Many of them who were sent to work in European plantations abroad, particularly in Lanka, Malaysia and Fiji never returned.[15] The crude treatment of the people caused deep seated agony.

The political restrictions, economic disabilities, spread of western education, growth of communication and the working of social organisations created a situation favourable for an

13. *Andhra Patrika*, Madras, 31 August 1929.
14. *Hindunesan*, Madras, 24 January 1917.
    The *Tamil Nadu* reported that because of the import of textiles, India lost sixty crores of rupees every year. (*Tamil Nadu*, 21 July 1930)
15. *Andhra Patrika*, Madras, 31 August 1929.

awakening in the land. The educated people, who took advantage of the western system of instruction, found the political bondage and economic degradation of the country intolerable. With the growth of communication system, they were enabled to forge contacts and exchange views. Temples, mutts, mosques and churches served as centres of discussion on matters of common interest. The nationalist press carried the message of freedom to the nearby towns and remote villages. The Tamils as the result of the devoted work of eminent scholars, -European as well as Indian-discovered the glory of their literary heritage and drew a new inspiration from the songs and ballads, sung in praise of the valour of heroes of the past, to work for the liberation of the country. This endeavour found its manifestation in the formation of socio-political organisations.

Socio-Political Organisations

By 1850 the elite of Madras took a leading interest in the formation of socio-political organisations to ventillate the grievances of the people. The premier city of South India and capital of the Presidency, Madras emerged as a cosmopolitan city and a meeting ground of eastern and western civilizations. The aristocrats and intellectuals of the different regions of South India-Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese and Malayalee-settled in this city Because of its geographical location and European association aminities of the eastern as well as western kinds were there. The rest of the people were so poor that they toiled day and night in the service of the aristocrats, intellectuals and Europeans in their bid to eke out a living.

The parties, that were destined to play a significant role in the future, made their appearance in the circle of the elite among the aristocrats, for they were the people who could read the cross currents of political developments and translate their ideas into action. They had the intellectual calibre, the needed wealth and the required leisure. Now they decided to advance the nationalist cause, but keeping their own interests in view.

Due to the initiative taken by Gajula Lakshminarasu Chetty, a rich merchant, supported by the land lords and businessmen, formed the Madras Native Association in 1852. Seeking to promote the interests of their community, these associations made representations to the Government for the rectification of their grievances on revenue, judicial and educational matters.[16] Before long the necessity of a broader organisation was felt. Ananda Charlu suggested the formation of an Indian association with branches in towns, where the elite could discuss the issues. N. Sivasami Iyer too advocated the creation of an all India organisation for advancing the cause of representative government. These marked the beginnings of more positive developments in the political scene.[17]

The Theosophical Society, that was founded at New York in 1875, established its head quarters at Adayar in 1882. An international society, devoted to spiritual reform, made Madras its centre of activity. Theosophy, which meant divine wisdom, came out of a spiritualist movement, that led the people to believe that the departed souls maintained communion with the living beings. The tappings in the haunted houses, it was felt, were nothing but the attempts that were made by the dead to communicate with the living.[18] It was believed that through spiritual development man could become god like.[19] For promoting this spiritual development the theosophists sought to identify universal divine principles, the hidden laws of nature. This led them to a study of religion, philosophy and science of ancient India as well as of modern west. The theosophical system appeared Christian, but Sri Krishna in place of Jesus Christ and *Bhagavad Gita* in place

16. G. Parameswaran Pillai, *Representative Men of Southern India*, Madras, 1896, pp. 145-155.
17. R. Suntharalingam, *Politics and Nationalist Awakening In South India*, 1852-1891, Tucson, 1974, pp. 208-222.
18. H. S. Olcott, *Theosophy, Religion and Occult Science*, Covent Gardens, 1885, p. 216.
19. E. R. Mc Neile, *From Theosophy to Christian Faith*, Bombay, 1919, p. 51.

of the *Bible* occupied the pride of place.[20] The theosophists adored the Aryan culture and opposed the Christian Missions. In consequence they were able to gain converts among the Brahmins of Madras. *The West Coast Spectator*, published from Mangalore, however, deplored that theosophy exercised a pernicious influence upon the educated Indians. "It is a pitiable sight to see men of education and intellect implicitly believing in the so called masters, who it has been proved, exit only in imagination of some of the bosses of the society". Yet, under the leadership of Annie Besant, the Theosophical Society became an effective agency for the promotion of nationalism.

In 1883 the Muslims established the Madras branch of the Central National Mahomedan Association, that was founded in Bengal. In the following year P. Anandacharlu and P. Rangiah Naidu formed the Madras Mahajana Sabha. As a party of the rich, it had only a limited influence. It demanded the reform of the legislature and the administration.[21] In 1886 the the Christians formed the National Church with a view to asserting their own identity, free from the control of the European missions.[22]

Not content with the formation of these organisations, P. Anandacharlu, P. Rangiah Naidu and S. Subramania Iyer met at Mylapore, Madras, in December 1884 and held discussions. In this conference there emerged the idea of a national congress. These leaders attended the first session of the Indian National Congress, when it was held in December 1885 at Bombay.[23] The Congress held its third session at Madras in 1887. Presided over by Bhardrudin Tyabji, it called upon the British to expand the legislatures, to separate

20. I.A. Sharrock, *Can Hinduism be Revived*, p. 8.
21. Public G. O. 1433, Madras, 10 July 1886.
22. R. Suntharalingam, *Politics and Nationalist Awakening in South India, 1852-1891*, pp. 208-252.
23. Annie Besant, *How India Wroght for Freedom*, Madras, 1915, p. 1 and *The Hindu*, 15 August, 1967.

the judiciary from the executive and to promote cottage industries Also it set up a committee for the political education of the people.[24] The party made an effort to rouse nationalism but its impact upon the society was limited as it was looked upon as a Brahmin organisation.

This was a period when the Dravidians entertained bitter feelings against the Brahmins. Partly because of the ordeals that they suffered and partly because of new cultural influences, they became awakened. They resented the exploitation to which they were subjected to in the name of gods and the rulers. Though the Brahmins constituted only a little more than three per cent of the population, it was felt that they presided over a vast system of mutual hatred and untouchability, led an easy going life in the temples, promoted the ascendancy of the monotonous *bharata natya* and *kirtanas* at the expense of the exquisite folk dances and songs of the Dravidians and gained almost a complete monopoly of the positions, open to the Tamils in the administration. By 1912 they held fifty five per cent of the posts of district munsiffs and eighty two per cent of the posts of subjudges.[25] In consequence though the English were cosidered as the rulers, in reality the Brahmins ruled over the Tamils.[26] Added to this, they entrenched themselves at the commanding heights of the society, taking advantage of the superstitions of the inhabitants. Secure in their status, they exploited the other communities and treated them with contempt. To the Dravidians, the Congress Party appeared a taboo, for it was controlled by the hated Brahmin as the Christian Church had been a taboo to the Brahmins as it was dominated by the despised Parayar. Therefore a new party appeared essential. Accordingly in 1916 P. Theagaraya Chetty, an influential member of the Madras

24. B. S. Baliga, *Madras in the Struggle for Independence*, 1957, pp. 5 6.
25. P. Spratt, *D.M.K. In Power*, Bombay, 1970, p. 14.
26. E. P. Irchick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, Bombay, 1969, p. 13.

Corporation, and other leaders founded the South Indian Liberal Federation. Raja of Panagal, K. V. Reddy, C. Natesa Mudaliar and Raja of Bobili joined this party. Two other organisations called the Madras Dravidian Association and the South Indian Peoples Association too came into existence. The three associations before long combined themselves into the Justice Party, called after the news paper issued by the South Indian Liberal Federation.[27] The party published two other news papers, *Dravidan* in Tamil and *Andhra Prakasika* in Telugu. It condemned the Indian National Congress as a party of the Brahmins, sought the attainment of responsible government through constitutional method and demanded justice for the Dravidian communities. The manifesto and constitution of the party listed the different objectives, which included improvement of the educational, social, economic, political, material and moral progress of the Dravidians, representation to the government of their views on promoting their interests and dissemination of sound and liberal views on public issues through lectures and publications.[28] Accordingly, the party asked for communal electorates and communal representation in public services. Because of its appeal to Dravidian sentiments, the party grew into prominence.

British imperialism appeared as strong as ever, yet the beginning of a popular reaction against it was very apparent. In consequence of the formation of the Indian National Congress and the Justice Party the political trends in Tamil Nadu began to assume definite shape One was a national party, while the other was a regional party, yet both of them advocated self government for the country and relied on constitutional methods. To the Brahmin dominated Congress, political liberation from British rule came as the primary objective, while to the Dravidan dominated Justice Party, social liberation

27. C. V. Subba Rao, *Life and Times of K. V. Reddi Naidu*, Rajamundri, 1957, p. 30.

28. P. Spratt, *D.M.K. In Power*, Bombay, 1970, pp. 5-6. The Communists extended their activity to Tamil Nadu by 1927.

from Brahmin domination came as the primary motive. Naturally this led them into conflict with each other, weakening the nationalist forces among the Tamils.

Behind the political banners there lurked two remnant yet powerful feudal orders—the clerical order of the Brahmins and the aristocratic elite of the Dravidians. It does not appear that either section was guided by any enlightened motive of serving either the country or the 'untouchables'. On the other hand class interests led these feudal sections to assume enlightened postures. Through their service to British imperialism the Brahmins extended their influence from religion to administration. Now they sought the extension of their influence from administration to political authority, for which nationalism served as the rallying point. The caste Hindu aristocrats on the other hand wanted to extend their influence from land, industry and trade to administration, for which they were prepared to serve imperialism as the Brahmins did. They too wanted to capture political authority in opposition to imperialism but they made political freedom secondary to social emancipation. The communal attitudes and feudal compositions restricted the capability of these political parties to serve the common people.

Chapte XXV

MOVEMENT FOR SELF GOVERNMENT

The organisation of the Madras Mahajana Sabha in 1884 represented the work of the aristocratic elite, yet it was of major significance in the history of the national movement in Tamil Nadu. It made constitutional reform its principal objective and launched a programme aimed at the political education of the people. Before long, however, its activity merged with that of the Indian National Congress. Rangiah Naidu and G. Subramania Iyer, who figured prominently in the Mahajana Sabha, associated themselves with the Congress. At its third session held at Madras in 1887 the Congress Party too recognised the need for the political education of the people. Accordingly, it set up local committees for the attainment of this objective. Also it demanded administrative and constitutional changes for giving responsibility to the people.

A series of developments, both internal as well as external, powerfully influenced the political developments in the Tamil Country. For long the political leaders and nationalist organisations had been seeking the redressal of grievances through prayers and petitions to the British. But bitter experiences led them to believe that this policy was futile. Therefore they felt that swaraj or self government was the need of the hour. As the British were not prepared to concede to this demand, different methods of struggle came in for consideration. They included resistance to authority, boycott of foreign goods, promotion of swadeshi industries, prevention of the emigration of workers to European plantations abroad and the revival of the panchayats. The patriotic songs composed by nationalist poets, particularly Subramania Bharati, excited a national spirit in the country. Secondly, the partition of Bengal against the will of the people and the ill treatment of the Indians in South Africa spread a wave of resentment among the Tamils. Thirdly, the signal victories gained by the oppressed people abroad

gave encouragement to the nationalists. As a result of a heroic struggle against Ottoman imperialism, the Balkan people asserted their independence. In 1905 the Asiatic Japan defeated the formidable white power, Russia. The nationalist press gave wide currency to these spectacular developments and contributed to the self confidence that was emerging in the people.

The Swadeshi Navigation Company

The popular discontent against British imperialism found expression in boycott and swadeshism. The Congress volunteers and patriotic organisations discouraged the people from

V. O. Chidambaram Pillai

purchasing foreign goods, particularly textile products and promoted the sale of India made goods.[1] By 1906-1907 the people

1. *Nadegannadi*, Madras, 9 April, 1907.

established three organisations at Madras for the promotion of swadeshism. The Industrial Association raised small contributions and established warehouses exclusively for storing and selling swadeshi goods. The Swadeshi League undertook the preaching of swadeshism to the masses and the sale of swadeshi goods. The Balabharath Association or Young India issued pamphlets in Tamil and arranged popular lectures in support of the movement.[2] Another association called Swadeshivastu Pracharini Sabha, that too had its headquarters at Madras, sought to popularise the sale of locally made goods. In the mean time a national fund was raised for promoting the Swadeshi Movement.[3]

However, the organisation of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company marked the most spectacular development in the history of the movement. Eager to revive the naval tradition of the Tamils to provide practical training in ship building to the people and determined to challenge the British monopoly of maritime traffic, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai (1872-1936) announced his decision in 1906 at Shiyali to launch a navigation company. Accordingly, with the subscriptions raised from merchant communities and nationalist organisations, he founded the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company at Tutukudi. He raised a capital of ten lakhs of rupees and purchased two ships, *Gallia* and *Lawoe* and launched them on the sea route between Tutukudi and Ceylon in competition with the British companies. The local company emerged as a rival to the British India Steam Navigation Company, a white concern operating between Colombo and Tutukudi. This daring venture excited considerable enthusiasm among the nationalists.[4] On July 22, 1907 the *Swadesamitran* reported that despite the efforts made by the

2. *Swadesamitran*, Madras, 22 October 1907.
3. *Ibid.*, 5 June 1906.
4. A. Ramaswami, (ed.) *Ramanathapuram District Gazetteer*, Madras 1972, pp. 109-110.

Feringhes to crush it, the company was firmly established.[5] Before long, however, this assertion made by this nationalist paper proved into a reverie. Confronted with fierce competition from the European companies and the suspicions that it excited in the British Government, the Company fell into evil days. Also, it lacked technical skill and operational facilities.[6] As it continued to incur losses, *The Hindu* appealed for public support, but the British forbade the sale of tickets in the bazaars.[7] In consequence the company had to be closed down in ten years and sold to the British. This came as a big disappointment to the nationalists. *The Indian Patriot* deplored : the failure of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company "will establish to our lasting discredit and shame that all our talk about swadeshi and the development of indigenous industries is a mere farce, that we lack the sincerety born of strong convictions and lastly that the Indian as a businessman is least to be trusted and relied upon."[8]

Murder of Ashe

As the boycott and Swadeshi Movement gained wider proportions, the British sought to stem it through repression. The police raided the shops that were suspected for dealing with swadeshi goods, imposed restrictions upon the holding of meetings, proceeded against the nationalist news papers and imprisoned the patriots.[9] On charges of conspiracy the English arrested the popular leaders, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva. As a protest against the arrest of Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva a mob assembled at Tirunelveli and ransacked public buildings. In 1908 the mill workers of Tirunelveli and Tutukudi struck work. The agita-

5. *Swadesamitran*, Madras, 22 July 1907.
6. *Vartakamitran*, Madras, 8 January 1922.
7. *The Swadesamitran*, Madras, 22 July 1907 and *The Hindu*, Madras, 3 September 1909.
8. *The Indian Patriot*, Madras, 2 September 1909.
9. *The Swadesamitran*, Madras, 22 October 1907.

ting workers of Tirunelveli joined by a large mob, attacked the police station, the court building and the municipal office. Sub Collector Ashe fired into the crowd and killed four persons. Yet rioting continued for a week, leading to police repression.[10] Angered at this high handed actions of the British, Vanchi Aiyar, one of the patriots shot and killed Ashe at Maniachi Railway Station in 1911. The assassin ran for a while and shot himself dead. A letter that was found with him indicated that he did it as part of his duty as an Indian.[11] Several news papers condemned this incident as an outrage. *The Lawyer*, published from Madras and the *Qasim ul Akhar*, published from Bangalore, attributed the murder to the anarchical tendencies in the district.[12] Joining the chorus *The Hindu* denounced it as a distardly and diabolical act and wrote "all sections of public will view it with horror and indignation this outrage on an able and sympathetic district officer."[13] The investigation into this incident indicated that it was the result of a wide spread conspiracy.

In retaliation the British launched repression against the people on an extensive scale. Police arrested the suspects and subjected them to torture. While Chidambaram Pillai was convicted for forty years in prison, Subramania Siva for ten years. Surendranath Arya the fury nationalist of Mylapore, was arrested charges of sedition and condemned for transportation for eleven years. On appeal the sentences on Pillai and Siva were reduced to six years each of rigorous imprisonment. The patriots were harassed in jails. Confined with hardened criminals in Coimbatore jail and then at Cannanore, Pillai was put to work on oil mill and in stone breaking. Released in 1912, he spent the rest of his life in disappointment, for extremism that he advocated lost its ground and the Congress led by M. K. Gandhi adopted a policy of moderation. Yet in 1920 he attended the Congress Session at Calcutta to oppose

10. Sedition Committee, Report, Madras, 1918, p. 165.
11. *Swadesamitran*, 18 June 1911.
12. Criminal Investigation Department, Report, 9 September 1911.
13. *The Hindu*, Madras, 17 June 1911.

Non-Co-operation and to advocate the policy of accepting what was given and fighting for more. Finding his mission a failure, he left politics and devoted himself to literature.[14]

Congress Failure

A new situation developed in 1914, when the World War I broke out. Great Britain took India to the arena of war. This had its dreadful effect upon the economic life of the Presidency. Because of the impact of war, exports fell by thirty four per cent and imports by thirty seven per cent. As Germany and her allies discontinued the purchase of commercial products, the cultivation of cotton, coconut and ground nut declined. Industrial development and commercial activity suffered a serious set back. The revenue of the Government and earnings of the railways too fell. In the mean time because of the war, public resources were diverted for unproductive expenditure.[15] These developments were so dismal in their consequence that the people were thrown into gloom.

At this critical juncture the Indian National Congress failed the people. Though England was the mother country, the Americans wrested their rights taking advantage of her European entanglements. The Congress Party, on the other-hand, decided to extend its full support to its imperialist enemy. At its session in 1914 the Congress passed a ridiculous resolution conveying its gratitude for sending the Indian troops to the war front and thereby affording to the people of India an opportunity of showing that they were prepared to fight shoulder to shoulder with the people of other parts of the Empire in defence of right and justice and the cause of the Empire. In betrayal of the nationalist cause S. P. Sinha, the President of the Congress in 1915, declared "the wave of loyalty which swept over India has touched the hearts of all classes. . . .The Bangalee is just as anxious to fight under the

14. *The Hindu*, Madras, 3 September 1972.

15. Report on Administration of Madras Presidency, 1914-15, pp. 1-2.

banner of His Majesty the King Emperor, as the Sikh and the Pathan . . .We seek to make no capital out of the service so ungrudgingly rendered by our country men to the Empire." In fact the grip of slavery was so complete that the leaders of the Congress competed with each other in the expression of their loyalty to the foreign administration.[16] Accordingly, the country contributed men and material in support of Great Britain's war effort.

Home Rule Agitation

In this hour of national humiliation, a lady from Ireland Mrs. Annie Besant, came to the rescue of the movement. As President of the Theosophical Society, she wielded considerable influence. Though she was a moderate, she was dissatisfied with the British administration, as the elected members of the legislature were denied freedom to voice the grievances of the people. Early in 1915 she wrote a series of articles in her news paper, *New India*, in support of the demand for self government. Without swaraj, she asserted, it was impossible for India to find a remedy to her problems of poverty and unemployment. The English countered this demand with the question whether India had self government in the past and proceeded to confiscate the security that was given for her news paper.[17]

Undeterred, Annie Besant carried on a crusade against British imperialism. She formed what was called 'Madras Parliament' and a 'cabinet' with herself as prime minister and some Brahmins as ministers and held frequent meetings at Gokhale Hall, Madras, in her attempt to train the people in parliamentary practices.[18] In 1916 supported by Arundale and Wadia, she organised the Home Rule League at Madras. It had a limited objective, for it wanted to achieve home rule

16. R. C. Majumdar, (ed.) *Struggle for Freedom*, Bombay, 1969, pp. 182-184
17. *The Hindunesan*, 12 September 1917.
18. *Commonweal*, 26 February 1915.

through constitutional methods, to maintain association of India as a 'free nation' within the British Empire and to extend support to the Indian National Congress.[19]

The agitation that was launched by Annie Besant excited a mild flutter in the political circles. The leaders made speeches, students boycotted classes and labourers struck work. The workers in the Harvey Mills, Madurai, went on strike and gained a twenty five per cent increase of their wages. Several people boycotted foreign goods, began using swadeshi goods and demanded the enactment of welfare legislations.[20] As the movement spread from Madras to the different districts, the nationalist news paper *Hindunesan*, wrote: The agitation for self government or swaraj which began in the shape of home rule has now begun to take firm root. The Anglo Indian oppositionists are moving heaven and earth to put an end to the agitation by creating differences and by threats. They "work themselves into a frency and dance like puppets. . . ."[21] On the other hand the pro-British paper, *Ravi* denounced the move: "The present is not a fit time for political agitation when the Empire is fighting for its own existence, it is wrong, seditious, mean, contemptible and almost criminal to disturb the moral and material strength of India and the Empire".[22] In June 1917 the police arrested Besant and her associates and confined them in the Nilgiris. But this excited popular resentment. As strikes and demonstrations continued unabated, she was released in the same year. Since then the Home Rule Agitation slowly ebbed away.[23]

Annie Besant formulated a definite programme and led

19. Home Rule League, Proceedings of the First Meeting of the Executive Council, Madras, 8 October 1819.
20. Fortnightly Report, Government of Madras, Madras, 18 May 1918.
21. *The Hindunesan*, Madras, 14 September 1917.
22. *The Ravi*, Madras, 27 January 1917.
23. In 1919 the Congress Party launched the Non Co-operation Movement. Besant refused support and her popularity waned.

her Home Rule League into a struggle against the British. The determination with which she carried on the struggle excited the appreciation of the nationalists. However, it was no surprise that the agitation ended in failure. She received support only from a small circle, the aristocratic elite, particularly the Brahmins, but they were not prepared to face either the lathis or the bullets. It was her supreme folly that she simultaneously alienated the British and the common people. She used to remark : "Better a thousand times suffer injustice from the men of your country than submit to foreign yoke". This was an attack upon the British but incidentally she did not spare the men of India.[24] At the same time through her identification with the Brahmins and crusade against the Justice Party, she turned the masses against her. In December 1916 Theagaraya Chetty, leader of the Justice Party, issued a manifesto attacking the Home Rule Movement as a scheme devised by the Brahmins who were not content with having secured a practical monopoly of political power and high government appointments, sought to extend their influence.[25] In fact it was impossible for a foreign lady to fight simultaneously against the British, the Dravidians and the menfolk. No wonder, the Home Rule Agitation failed miserably.[26]

Despite the failure of the agitations the British were prepared to concede marginal reforms. This was in a bid to satisfy the moderates and to gain the continued loyalty of India to imperialism during the critical period of the World War. Accordingly, E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, made a declaration on 20th August 1917 promising the increasing association of the Indians in every branch of the administration and "the gradual development of self governing

24. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 4 May 1928.
25. B. S. Baliga, *Madurai District Gazetteer*, Madras 1960, pp. 75-76.
26. B. G. Tilak, V. O Chidambaram Pillai, S. Satyamurti and Subramania Siva formed the Indian Home Rule League with headquarters at Poona as a rival organisation to Annie Besant's Home Rule League.

institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire". This was followed up with discussions on constitutional reforms and the enactment of the Government of India Act of 1919. This Act created a Central Legislature consisting of two houses at New Delhi and introduced dyarchy in the provincial governments. In this system the provincial executive was to consist of reserved subjects under the control of the provincial governor and executive council who were not made responsible to the Legislature and the transferred subjects which were under the control of the governor and ministry who were made responsible to the legislature The Congress rejected these reforms but the Swarajists-a wing of the Congress—decided to enter the legislatures with the declared objective of wrecking the constitution from within.[27]

27. N. K. Sinha and A. C. Banerjee, *History of India*, 1956, pp. 631-633.

Chapter XXVI

THE JUSTICE BUBBLE

The World War, that was fought from 1914 to 1918, had its natural impact upon the economic and political life of the peple in the Tamil Country. Because of prolonged war and serious drought food grains disappeared from market and workers lost their jobs. The poor pay and bad working condition caused labour unrest and strike in mills and railways. Rioting and looting too became common. Despite the internal disorders, the Madras Presidency and other provinces, as it was resolved by the Congress Party, extended support to the British war effort. The Presidency contributed more than 62,000 men for service in the theatres of war and seventy five lakhs of rupees to the war fund. In return for these meritorious services, the people expected recognition of their right to self government. But the British rewarded them with repression and killing, particularly the massacre at Jallianwallah Bagh in March 1919. The Government of India Act of 1919, that provided for what was called dyarchy in the provinces, introduced limited responsible government. The elections that were held under this scheme offered an opportunity to the political parties to seek a sharing of administrative authority with the British.

Justice party in Power

The Act of 1919 had a mixed reaction. The nationalists condemned it as inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing. In view of this dissatisfaction the Congress refused to contest the election of 1920.[1] The Justice Party on the other hand welcomed the reforms and decided to co-operate with the British, for it found an opportunity to capture power and check the Brahmin influence. The British favoured the Justice Party as they found an opportunity to keep the Home

1. The Madras Year Book, 1924, p. 36.

Rule League under check.[2]

The Justice Party shot into prominence in an atmosphere that was marked by communal tension in the relation between the Dravidians and the Brahmins. For fear of continued Brahmin domination, the caste-Hindus extended their support to this party. In the election of 1920 it faced the Brahmin dominated Home Rule League. It promised improvement of the lot of the Dravidians, proportionate representation for different communities on public services, promotion of education and support to agricultural classes.[3] The party captured sixty three out of ninety eight elected seats in the Legislative Council. Lord Wellington, the Governor of Madras, invited A. Subbarayalu Reddiar, leader of the party, to form the ministry. He was unofficially called prime minister.

The substance of power remained with the British, yet the new ministry seeking to cling to power, extended its support to imperialism against the rising tide of nationalism. It concentrated its effort on the distribution of offices and honours among the influential members of different communities rather than doing anything for the benefit of the country. However its devotion to imperialism and the inter-communal conflicts within its ranks contributed to the steady erotion of the popularity of the party. In the election of 1923 it fought against the Swarajya Party which belonged to the Congress fold, but could capture only forty four out of ninety eight elected seats.[4] Thereupon the Governor nominated seventeen Justicites to the Council so as to enable the party to gain a majority. Thereupon Raja of Panagal formed the ministry. An able administrator and a liberal contributor to party funds, this Telugu zamindar sought to sustain the party in power, but he found the inner contradictions so formidable that he failed to arrest

2. *The Swadesamitran*, Madras, 2 January 1919.
3. *The Justice*, Madras, 21 November 1920.
4. *The Thainadu*, Madras, 2 December 1923.
In the election of 1923 the Swarajists capturted eleven seats.

its decay. The party lost the support of the Adi Dravidas and the Muslims.

In the election of 1926 a divided Justice Party faced the opposition of a united Congress. C. Rajagopalachari who opposed council entry retreated from politics over the Sermadevi Gurukulam episode.[5] This enabled the Swarajists led by Srinivasa Iyengar to gain control of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. While the Justice Party secured only twenty one seats, the Congress forty one and the independents thirty six. The Swarajists emerged as the largest single party, yet in accordance with the Congress creed it refused to accept power.[6]

Justicites *vs* Swarajists

Two major issues, nationalism and council entry, figured prominently in the political developments of the period. The nationalists came into conflict with the regionalists over the first issue, while the Swarajists with the Congressmen over the second. The nationalists, though themselves were mostly communal, condemned the Justicites as parochial, communal pro-British and anti-national. In fact the Justice Party allowed its anti-Brahmin sentiments and pro-aristocratic leanings to blur its vision in adopting a policy hostile to national interests. The attitude of the party appeared so unfavourable that it sided with imperialism in the suppression of the nationalist movement and prevented the Tamils from assuming a dominant role in the freedom struggle. Yet the leaders of the Justice Party asserted that they stood for the destruction of Brahmin domination and promotion of the welfare of the backward

5. At Sermadevi V. V. S. Aiyer, supported by Congress funds, managed *gurukulam*. To the Brahmins and non-Brahmins food was served separately. This created a controversy forcing C. Rajagopalachari to quit leadership of provincial Congress.

   The Congress at its session at Belgaum in 1926 permitted the Swarajists to contest election in the name of the Congress. It also decided against accepting office.

6. *The Swarajya*, Madras, 24 January 1924.

communities so as to render progress towards self government smooth. The conflict between the two parties presented impediments to the political and social liberation of the country.

In the Congress there began a controversy over the question of council entry. At its annual session at Gaya in 1922 C. R. Das, President of the Congress, made a vigorous plea for council entry but the party voted in favour of a motion of C. Rajagopalachari for council boycott. Thereupon C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the Swarajya Party within the Congress organisation.[7] The news papers, the *Navasakti* and the *Tamil Nadu* opposed council entry but the *Swadesamitran* welcomed it. In the formation of a new party with a definite programme of council entry the Brahmins in the provincial Congress saw a hope of preventing the Justice Party from capturing power. They, therefore, identified themselves mostly with the Swarajist Party. This brought one communal party into conflict with another communal party.

In the election of 1926 the Ayyangar dominated Swarajist Party defeated the caste Hindu dominated Justice Party. Yet in accordance with the policy of the Congress Party, the General Council of the Swarajist Party refused to accept office. Now the local Swarajists, eager to keep the Justice Party away from power, decided to support an independent. This enabled A. Subbarayan, a zamindar, to form his ministry.[8]

Now, seeking to discredit the Swarajist Party and the British administration, the Justice Party organised an agitation. This had no perceptible impact. However, its effort to wean away the pro-Dravidian section seriously strained the unity of

7. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, *The Struggle for Freedom*, p. 389
8. The Swarajists wanted to attend the councils only on occasions when in combination with other parties they could effectively obstruct the policy of the government. But as the Madras Swarajists were opposed to this policy in view of their attitude towards the Justicites, they were permitted to work in coalition with the opposition parties for embarrassing the administration.

the Swarajists.[9] Depending upon their support, the Justicites tabled a no confidence motion against the Subbarayan ministry but they could not gain enough support. Thereafter they decided to change their tactics. At a conference that was held at Coimbatore in July 1927 the Justice Party permitted its members to infiltrate into the Congress for changing it from inside and to demand provincial autonomy in place of dyarchy. The first of these decisions was calculated to set the Dravidians against the Brahmins within the ranks of the Congress Party and the second to embarrass the British administration.[10]

In 1930 when the next election was held, the Congress and the Swarajist parties in consonance with a decision taken at Bombay, refused to contest. This ensured for the Justice Party an easy victory. While the Congress launched the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Justice Party formed a ministry with Muniswami Naidu as the leader. In 1932 Raja of Bobbili replaced him as Prime Minister of the Presidency. In an attempt to strengthen the party and to weaken the Swarajists, the Justicites invited the Brahmins to join it, yet the decline of the party could not be long postponed. In 1934 they suffered another serious defeat at the polls, but fortune and opportunism again joined together in their favour. As the Congress Party refused to assume the administration, the Justice Party stepped in. Raja of Bobbili formed his second ministry, which continued in authority until the election of 1937.[11]

Work of the Justice Party

The Justice Party remained in power for a period of thirteen years. Its administration was noted for the attempts it made to give representation to Dravidian communities in the

9. Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1926-27, pp. 10-12.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-16.
11. B, S. Baliga, (ed) *Studies in Madras Administration*, Vol. 1, pp. 7-29.

public services, improvement of the status of depressed classes and reform of education. The government took over the power of appointing district munsiffs out of the control of the High Court, that was dominated by the Brahmins. The Communal G. O.s (Government Orders) of 1921 and 1922 provided for the reservation of appointments in local bodies and educational institutions for Dravidian communities in increased proportion.[12] The Staff Selection Board, created by the Panagal Ministry in 1924, was made the Public Service Commission in 1929. It was the first of its kind in India. The women were granted the right to vote on the same basis as was given to men.[13] The Hindu Religious Endowment Act of 1921, enacted by the Panagal ministry, attempted, though it was without any success, the elimination of corruption in religious endowments and constituted committees for the management of temple properties. The Madras State Aid to Industries Act of 1922, enacted because of the initiative of K. V. Reddi Naidu, was intended to provide credits to industries, allot land and water, help research and to guarantee minimum return for the capital invested. This proved favourable for industrial progress. The *devadasi* system which enabled the priests in temples to lead a life of indolence, was abolished. The indigenous system of medicine was given due encouragement. *Poromboke* lands were allotted to the poor as house sites. The party extended the benefits of primary education to the depressed classes through fee concessions, scholarships and mid day meals, but made no attempt to widen employment opportunities. The administration reorganised the working of the University of Madras. Both the Tamils and the Telugus demanded the creation of more universities. In consequence the Andhra University was established in 1926 and Annamalai University in 1929.[14]

12. Madras Legislative Council, 2 April 1921, Proceedings, pp. 1590-91.
13. P. Spratt, *D.M.K. In Power*, p. 25.
14. Gopala Menon, *Non-Brahmin Movement and Justice Party*, *Justice Party Souvenir*, pp. 95-98.

Collapse of the Party

The election of 1937 was of importance, for it brought two major parties-one national and other regional into a major confrontation. The Government of India Act of 1935 provided for provincial autonomy and the electoral victory meant the assumption of a major responsibility in the administration of the province. K. V. Reddi Naidu led the Justice Party, while C. Rajagopalachari the National Congress in the South. Two new parties, the People's Party and the Muslim League, too entered the fray but cut into the votes counted on by the Justice Party. S. Satyamurthi, C. Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal Nehru campaigned for the National Congress. In the election the Congress captured 152 out of 215 seats in the Legislative Assembly and 26 out of 46 in the Legislative Council. However the party declined to form the ministry, as it was dissatisfied with British refusal to guarantee against day-to-day interference in the administration. This led to the formation of an interim government under K. V. Reddi Naidu. In July 1937 as the British Government gave the needed assurance, the Congress formed its ministry under C. Rajagopalachari.

After its electoral defeat in 1937, the Justice Party crumbled and went out of existence. This was inevitable because it represented an opportunistic alliance of rajas, zamindars and chettiyars. Sustained by anti-Brahmin feeling and supported by the aristocrats, merchants and industrialists, its leaders led a life of comfort and luxury. The relics of the feudal past, they took more interest in club and golf than in field and factory. As a result they made no attempt to organise the peasants and workers in support of the party. The consequent alienation of the common people from the party led to its collapse. Secondly, the party worked in collusion with British imperialism in the suppression of the freedom movement. This was looked down as betrayal of the nationalist cause. The attitude of the leaders in particular appeared quite unfavourable. Subbarayalu Reddiar, the first

prime minister of the party, demanded the adoption of stringent measures against the non-co-operators.[15] In 1936 P. T. Rajan, one of the later leaders of the declining party, claimed in utter disregard to popular sentiments: "Repression succeeded in checking the civil disobedience campaign because the Justice Party and other such elements in the country encouraged such repression".[16] It was even believed that their news paper, *The Justice*, was in the pay of the British, for the latter purchased a thousand copies in return for its support.[17] Emboldened by the co-operation of the Justice Party, the British administration indulged in ruthless repression of the nationalists. It lathicharged the agitators, seized their properties, tortured them in the jails and shot several of them dead.[18] Pained at this crude attitude, Sardar Patel, the leader of the Congress Party, lamented that our fellow country men were to be blamed more than the foreigners for keeping the people in slavery.[19] In return for their services to imperialism the British rewarded the Justicites with honours and titles.[20] Thirdly, internal conflicts-rigional, linguistic as well as communal, seriously affected the unity of the party. For power and position quarrels erupted between the Tamils and the Telugus, between the Hindus and the Muslims and between the 'touchables, and the 'untouchables'. Abbas Ali Khan, one of the leaders of the party, regretted: "I have found out from actual experience that whenever the question of appointments came in, they always preferred a Mudaliar, a Naidu, a Chettiar or a Pillai but not a Muhammadan".[21] In addition the 'untouchables' conti-

15. *Andhra Patrika*, Madras, September 1922.
16. *Swarajya*, Madras, 14 July 1936.
17. *The Indian Patriot*, Madras, 21 March 1917.
18. *Andhra Patrika*, Madras, 15 January 1936.
19. *Mitawadi*, Calicut, 9 September 1929.
20. The News paper, *The India* on 14 September 1907 carried a catroon depicting the British as a bangle seller fitting the bangles of K. C. I. E., Diwan Bahadur, Rao Bahadur etc. into the wrists of Indian aristocrats for duping them into sacrificing patriotism. (*The India*, 14 September 1907.)
21. Legislative Council, Madras, Proceedings, 27 November 1923. Vol. 15, pp. 50-51.

nued to be ill treated. A resolution of the Anti-Untouchability Conference held at Madras in 1929 rightly pointed out that in restaurants, hotels, saloons and water pandals 'untouchables' were excluded. When their boys went to schools, caste Hindus withdrew their children. At meetings and factories the caste Hindus fell upon their the depressed people. In disgust many them led by M. C. Rajah left the Justice Party[22]. Finally, it should be stated that the Just ce Party came to power with a limited objective and when this was served it found its existence no more relevant. The principal grievance that warranted its emergence was the domination of the Brahmins in the administrative services. But this situation was corrected, though to a limited extent, through the communa G. O. The Congress in the mean time offered an alternative to the discontented masses. With its programme of equal opportunity for all communities, removal of u ntouchability, use of swadeshi articles and prohibition it proved acceptable to the common people. As a result, a Brahmin organisation as the Congress Party in Tamil Nadu had been, it transformed into a Dravidian organisation. Rajaji and Kamaraj represented these two trends in the transition of this party.

Eager to avert a doom that appeared inevitable, V. V. Ramasami Nadar, a leader of the Self Respect Movement, brought the leaders of the declining party to a conference. At a meeting that was held in 1935 the party leadership accepted his suggestion to create a small party executive, to form a propaganda board and to formulate a clear cut party programme. But the party already lost its charm and it was too late to bring about any resurrection.[23] In the election of 1951 it

22 J. H. Hutton, *Caste in India*, Bombay, 1963, pp. 198-206.
The *Mitavadi*, published from Calicut deplored: "If the Hindu leaders have the least fellow feeling towards the depressed communities they would no doubt have thrown their Srutis, Emritis and Puranas into the fire."
(*Mitavadi*, Calicut, 9 September 1929).

23. D. J. Arnold, *Nationalism and Regional Politics: Tamilnad*. India 1920-1937, (typed) pp. 341-342.

obtained only one seat. Though the Justice Party declined, on its ruins there emerged the Dravida Kazhagam. In 1944 in a conference at Salem the Justice party was constituted into the Dravida Kazhagam with the declared objective of forming a separate Dravida Nadu.[24]

24. *Namathu Kurikkol*, Mādras, 1948, p. 36.

Chapter XXVII

ADVANCE OF TAMIL

The period of British rule witnessed the phenomenal growth of Tamil language and literature. This was more because of individual initiative than because of any official patronage. In fact since ancient times Tamil, though it was the language of the masses and was the most international of all the Indian languages,[1] received no encouragement from the rulers. The Afghans, the Hoysalas, the Nayaks, the Marathas, the Wallajahs and the English preferred their own languages for official transactions. Despite the administrative neglect and frequent inroads made by alien languages-Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu, Telugu, Marathi and English, the Tamil language continued to survive as the language of the masses and maintained its individuality. This was because of its popular base and inherent strength.

The pioneering effort made by the Christian missionaries and the Muslim scholars led to a Tamil revivalism. The Europeans brought with them paper, pen and the press. Though paper and pen were known to the Tamils, normally the common peple learned writing on the sand and used pointed nails for writing on palm leaves. This tedious process came in the way of mass communication. The difficulties involved in the preparation and preservation of copies restricted the spread of knowledge. In the mean time the dominant communities looked upon knowledge as their monopolistic inheritance and refused to impart it to the people, who were considered as the untouchables.

The Christian missionaries in their bid to reach the

1. Among the Indian languages Tamil is the only language spoken and read by large sections of people in several countries-Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, Burma and Malaysia.

masses adopted Tamil as the language of communication. This led them to the study of Tamil for the explanation of religious dogmas and for the writing of books. Guided by their experience with other languages, they introduced scientific forms of presentation like the use of semi colons, colons, comas, question marks and full stops. Together with these they popularised debates and discussions, introduced western themes, undertook translations and initiated linguistic research. Under the impact of these developments, Tamil, that had been ignored for centuries as the language of the humbled people, entered the road to resilience. The results were far reaching, for a new attempt was made to re-discover the glory of Tamil culture and to enrich the Tamil heritage.

The Catholic missionaries of the eighteenth century and the Protestant missionaries of the nineteenth century took a leading interest in the study of Tamil. The Madura Mission of the Jesuits made the southern region of Tamil Nadu the area of their activity. Robert de Nobili wrote treatises in Tamil for the propagation of his religion. Father Beschi cultivated a sound scholarship in Tamil and published his well known work, *Grammar on the Common Dialect of the Tamil Language* in 1737 These Catholic missionaries were followed by the Protestant missionaries. Bishop Caldwell (1814-1891) on the basis of his extensive research and aided by local pandits published his work, *The Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages.* G. U. Pope (1820-1908) translated into English the classical works, *Thirukural, Thiruvachagam* and *Manimekhalai.* Reverend M. Winslow, an American missionary, wrote *A Comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary.* He concluded that Tamil in its poetic form was more polished than Greek and more copious than Latin. Mayuram Vedanayagam Pillai (1826-1889), a Christian pandit, made a beginning in the writing of Tamil novels and composed poems in a distinct rythm. Among his works, the well known was *Sathiaveda Kirthanaigal.* The prose writing of these scholars was packed with Sanskrit words, as they took the assistance of the Brahmins. The Muslim scholars too found interest in writing religious works and historical accounts

in Tamil. Umaru Pulavar, Kunangudi Mastan and Abdul Majid were the best known. Ramalinga Swamigal (1823-1874), was a poet, who drew to literature because of religious motive. A Saivite, he composed hymns for the propagation of his faith.[2] His collected songs were published into *Tiruarutpa* or the *Holy Verses of Grace*.[3]

The resistance against British imperialism and the struggle for independence had a powerful impact upon the growth of literature. There came into existence a series of historical ballads-*Khan Sahib Chandai* on the history of Khan Sahib's struggle against the Nawab and the English, *Panjalamkurichi Azhivu Charithira Kummi* on the rise and fall of the Kattabommans and *Sivagangai Seemai Charithiram* on the history of Marudus' struggle against the Company. These were so popular that they were recited at the festivals in the villages. The nationalist movement of the twentieth century had in its fold a galaxy of literary stars. Subramania Bharathi (1882-1921), the most outstanding of them, was not only a freedom fighter but also a patriotic poet. He edited the Tamil weekly, *India*, and composed patriotic songs in folk music forms with the primary object of promoting nationalist fervour among the masses. In 1908 he published his collection of *Swadesa Geethangal* and in 1909 *Janma Bhumi*. A social reformer, he considered the *Smritis* as a trap, for it drew a distinction between the Brahmin and non-Brahmin in the legal system. Because of his role in active politics against the British, he was jailed at Cuddalore in 1918 as prisoner number 253. He was released from prison but died early in life.[4] Nevertheless, he made significant contribution to the nationalist literature and Tamil renaissance. Bharatidasan (1891-1964), one of his disciples, came under the influence of socialism. His songs and novels were cons-

2. C. S. Srinivasachari, *Promotion of Dravidian Linguistic Studies in the Company's Days*, Calcutta, 1926, pp. 1-12
3. C. Jesudhasan and Hepzibah Jesudhasan, *A History of Tamil Literature*, Calcutta, 1961, pp. 252-54.
4. Madras Council, Public Department, G. O. 13, dated 15 January 1919

picuous for their revolutionary trend. Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai was a Gandhian in his way of life. The song that he composed for the Salt Satyagraha at Vedaranyam and the narrative poem, *Avanum Avalum* were the noted of his compositions. V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, patriot and scholar, wrote a literary criticism on *Thirukkural*.[5] Thiru Vi Kalyanasundara Mudaliar (1883-1953) popularly called Tiru Vi Ka, was the editor of the Tamil news papers, *Desabaktan* and *Navasakti*. A powerful speaker and a fascinating writer, he contributed to an elegant style in prose.[6] Kalki, who received training under Tiru Vi Ka, edited the magazines, *Ananda Vikatan* and *Kalki*.[7]

The struggle against social iniquities too contributed to the growth of Tamil literature. It led to the writing of works on social protest. The ballads *Kathavarayan Kathai* and *Madurai Veeran Kathai*, were two of the earliest of the works of this kind. The Christian scholars, A. Vadakkan, C. Masillamani, Vedamanikkam, Sivagurunathan and Pakyanathan wrote articles and composed poems for propagating the gospel of social equality. Pudumaipittan, an effective short story writer, used his themes for attacking evils in the social system. Rajam Aiyar wrote *Kamalambal Charithiram* and Madavaiya *Padmavathi Charithiram*, both on social themes.[8] This trend reached its culmination in the works of E. V. Ramaswami Naicker and C. N. Annadurai. Naicker's philosophy on the destruction of caste and distribution of wealth found expression in a series of publications, particularly the *Kudiyarasu* and the *Puratchi*. As the script of the Tamil language appeared unscientific, he advocated reform in this direction too. C. N. Annadurai's *Oru Iravu* (One Night) and *Velaikkari* (Maid Servant) with their accent on social criticism were popular among the common people.[9] In fact the works

5. Pulavar Maniyan, *Vidutalai Veerar V. O. C.*, Madras, 1976. pp. 15-32.
6. Ma Po. Sivagnanam, *Vidutalai Poril Tamizh Valarntha Varalaru*, Madras, 1970, pp. 1-10.
7. C. Jesudhasan and Hepzibah *op. cit.* p. 265.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 263-267.
9. R. C. Majumdar, (ed.) *Struggle for Freedom*, Bombay, 1969, pp. 946-951.

on the struggle for political freedom and social emancipation represented a unique contribution to the political and social content of Tamil.

Apart from these, there were other developments but they were mostly in imitation of the West. Thus numerous writers engaged themselves in a variety of literary output-they edited works, wrote historical novels, short stories, literary criticism, biographies, travelogues and the like. U. V. Saminathaier (1855-1942) edited and published the great classics, *Pathupattu, Silappathikaram, Manimekhalai, Chintamani* and *Purananuru*. Ramachandra Kavirayar and Parasurama Kavirayar wrote some of the early dramas in Tamil. Sundaram Pillai composed the famous song, *'Neerarung Kadaludutha'* on the Tamil home land in his work, *Manonmaniyam*. Kavimani Desiga Vinayagam Pillai (1876-1954) wrote short stories in a style, which was noted for simplicity and charm. Maraimalai Adigal (1876-1950) insisted upon purism in Tamil. Vaiyapuri Pillai and T. P. Minakshisundaran through their extensive studies revolutionalised linguistic research. As a result of the endeavours made by these devoted scholars, Tamil gained in elegance and style.[10]

The Tamil poetry that developed during this period was of two categories-the prose poetry patterned on the western type of free verse in which rhythm was patent or absent and musical songs written for films. The verses of Kamarasan and Mu Metha were good examples of the first kind, while those of Kalyanasundaram and Kannadasan were of the second category. Kamarasan's poems were noted for a zeal for social reform, while Metha for the glorification of the common man. Kalyanasundaram made the songs a media for propagating social virtues.[11]

In modern times Tamil has recorded a revivalism in literary content and popular interest. This is because of

10. D. Murthy, *Ikkala Kavithaigal-Marapum Puthumaium*, Madras, 1979. pp. 10-19,
11. *Ibid*, pp. 27-48.

certain historical developments—advent of Christianity, struggle for freedom and crusade for social justice. In this great transformation the Europeans took the lead before it reached the Tamils. Despite the phenomenal progress so far made, certain inadequacies continue as glaring. Usually no word, as it can be pronounced, and no sentence, as it is to be spoken or written, can be completed without borrowing a letter or word from Sanskrit. Attempts have been made to effect translations, but many of them are found as misleading. For instance, when the English word *imperialism* is translated into Tamil, it implies dictatorship. As in medieval times many of the writers still live in temples and palaces rather than in fields and huts. The themes, that they select for writing, are oriented towards what is bourgeois and what is beautiful, detached from what is common and what is natural. Even the literary trends are modelled after the West. These tendencies have widened the gulf between the language of the masses and that of the elite. The temptation to adore the past, and to admire the dead is so strong that critical approach is discouraged and stagnant thinking is strengthened. The resultant demoralisation has prevented the emergence of men of higher stature like Kambar or Valluvar in the literary world of the Tamils. As Professor C. Yesudhasan has rightly pointed out criticism does not flourish much in Tamil. "The conflict of thoughts and interests in Tamilnad is so heated that the prospect of having anything like a literature of sane, balanced and healthy criticism is as yet very remote."[12] Added to these, what is evident is that language, being the vehicle of knowledge, can develop only when the fountain of knowledge is strengthened. But frequently linguistic fanaticism has so much blurred the imagination that useful areas of knowledge like sciences, economics and history are discarded to the background. As a result while other languages march ahead, Tamil is forced to follow them through translations, that itself without success. These trends continue to work much to the detriment of the language.

12. C. Jesudhasan, *A History of Tamil Literature*, p. 272.

Chapter XXVIII

SELF RESPECT MOVEMENT

The Self Respect Movement represented the Dravidian reaction against Aryan domination in the working of the society. It aimed at liberating the society from the evils heaped upon it by religious custom and caste system with a view to gaining for the down trodden people a status of equality and dignity. If the Nadar Movemnet was directed by an oppressed community against the tyranny of the caste Hindus, the Self Respect Movement was directed by the Dravidian communities against the domination of the Brahmins. Through the destruction of social distinctions based upon caste and religion, it sought to erect a social order and a cultural system based upon equality and reason. It aimed at giving respect to the self instead of to the Brahmin.

The Self Respect Movement owed its origin to the Tamil resurgence and the opposition to Brahmin hegemony. By the nineteenth century Tamil renaissance gained strength because of a new interest in the study of the classical culture. The European scholars, particulary Caldwell, Beschi and Pope took a leading part in promoting this trend. Subsequently, C. V. Damodaran Pillai, Mayuram Vedavinayagam Pillai, Maramalai Aidgal, T.P. Meenakshisundaran and Swaminatha Iyer through their writings and discourses contributed to the discovery of the ancient glory of the Tamils. The poems composed by Bharathidasan, a disciple of Subramania Bharati, were noted for their style, beauty and force. C.N. Annadurai popularised a prose style in which words followed one after the other in symphony. This galaxy of scholars did much to liberate Tamil language from Brahminical influences. As a result the Tamils gained self confidence and determination to resist alien influences.

Further, the Dravidian communities decided to obtain,

for themselves a fair share in the administration. Among them, the caste Hindus in particular, received education in the schools and colleges founded by the British and the Christians. Many of them entered into trade and earned wealth. Despite their attainments and aptitudes they found their endeavours to gain employment in the administrative establishments thwarted by the manipulations made by the Brahmins, who were in the service of the English. As a result the educated people in different communities entertained a bitter feeling that the Brahmins came in the way of their progress.

The anti-Brahmin movement found in E. V. Ramaswami Naicker (1879-1973) its undisputed leader. Born at Erode in a Naicker family of Kannada descent, he had his education in a local school, but he was so naughty that his teacher certified him as unfit for school education. Nevertheless, he took an uncommon interest in the lot of the poor and the 'untouchables'. His eagerness to find an explanation for their misery led him to a critical study of religious texts. Dissatisfied with the inconsistencies that he found, he proceeded to the shrines in the North, yet his logical mind could find no consolation, for he found the sages, saints and devotees covering their criminal aptitudes under the veil of spiritualism. After his return, he decided to work for the freedom of the land, reconstruction of society and eradication of untouchability.

He joined the Congress Party, worked among the common people and led the Non-Co-operation Movement in 1920. Two years later, he was elected President of the Tamil nad Congress Committee. However he found the party unsuited to his ideals and the party leadership unconcerned with the general welfare of the common people. His identification with the struggles for social equality was looked upon with suspicion. In Kerala the Ezhavas and other 'untouchables' were forbidden from worshipping in the temples and entering the public streets. Their determination to assert their right to social equality found its manifestation in a

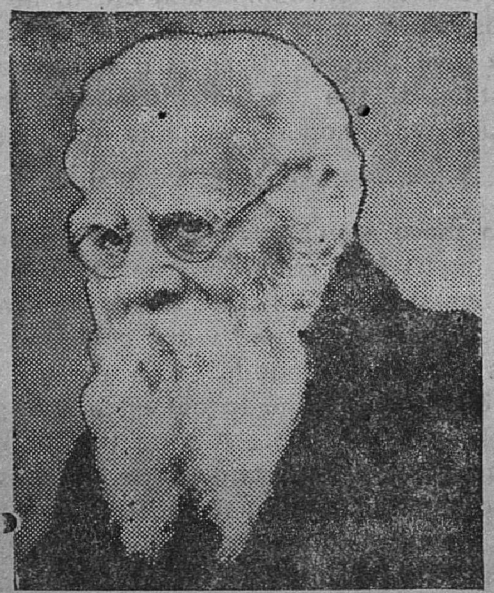
satyagraha at Vaikom in 1924. As reports of harrassment of the stayagrahis pured in, Ramaswami Naicker hurried to the centre of the struggle and courted arrest. Thereupon his wife Nagamma joined the movement. The agitation continued till the Government of Travancore opened the temple roads to all the Hindus, irrespective of caste[1]. In the mean time there came another incident. At Sermadevi a *guru kula ashram* was run with the funds contributed by the Congress Party for promoting national unity. But to the consternation of Naicker he found that V.V. Subramania Ayyar, the President of the *guru kula*, enforced the worst form of communal discrimination against the 'untouchables' in regard to accommodation, food and clothing. Angered at this, E.V.R. refused grants from Congress funds to the *gurukula*. By this time he broke with M.K. Gandhi, as the latter supported *Varnashrama dharma*, which laid down caste distinctions and reduced the non-Brahmins to the status of servitude.[2] Thereupon he sponsored a resolution in the party for providing equal employment and educational opportunities to the depressed communities, but it was defeated by a Brahmin section, supported by a pro-Brahmin group led by T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar. As a protest, he left the Congress.[3]

In 1925 Ramaswami Naicker founded the Self Respect Movement. The aim of the movement was the promotion of rational thinking, self respect and self confidence in the people, so as to enable them to enjoy the benefits of political and social freedom. Instead of religion, reason was to guide them. In fact 'self respect' was intended to restore to people their lost dignity and infuse a sense of pride in the Dravidians. For the attainment of this objective E.V.R. suggested a process of ruthless destruction of their cultural heritage,[4]

1. E.V.R. *Vaikam Poratta Varalaru*, Erode, 1968. pp. 7-16.
2. Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, Erode, 1960, pp. 102-114.
3. An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramaswami*, Erode, 1962, pp. 11-28.
4. K. Veeramani, *Suya Mariyathai Iyakka Ponvizha Malar*, (1925-1975), pp. 177-179.

for he explained: "The problem facing the rationalists, self respectors, and socialists is, to my mind, not social reform but destructive work undertaken with courage and determination".[5] Accordingly he advocated 1) the destruction of the time old institutions of caste, religion, princely order and zamindari system, 2) eradication of the evils of untouchability, inequality, distinctions based upon status and sex, Aryan domination and Hindi imperialism which found expression in North Indian leadership in politics, education, industry, commerce and business. On the positive side he advocated equal opportunities for all, liberation of women from bondage and inter-communal marriages and instituted self respect marriages with no priest and ritual.

To popularise his philosophy of free thinking and rationa-



E. V. Ramaswami Naicker

5. *Periyar Chintanaikal* Vol. I, p. 18.

lism, Naicker frequently toured the country, organised meetings, staged dramas, led demonstrations and published news papers. In the meetings held at Madurai, Chengalpattu and Virudhunagar resolutions were adopted against untouchability, casteism and capitalism. The Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians participated in the conferences, untouchables prepared meals for all and leaders released books on free thinking.[6] In these meetings religion came in for concentrated attack. He explained that caste and superstition were so deep rooted in Hindu religion and Hindu sculptures that they could not be destroyed without the destruction of the *Vedas*, the *Sastras*, the *Puranas* and the *Itihasas*. In 1958 at Coimbatore he declared: Almost all fine looking animals and birds have become our gods. Ant hills invite the gift of milk from our women folk. Why should the gods be undressed, bathed and dressed daily? Even the goddesses are undressed and bathed daily by the male priests, they need wives and concubines and are to be married every year. The gods wear spear, bow, arrow, dagger and chakra to conquer the evil forces. If so is it not time that Krishna ride a tank instead of the obsolete chariot? Should not the gods be equipped with modern weapons like hand granade or machine gun?

Based on these arguments, Naicker concluded that there were certain things which could not be mended but only ended. In the Superstition Eradiction Conference held at Salem in 1971 an attack was launched with cowdung and chappals on the pictures and idols of gods. This excited country wide demonstration but it was done to convince the people of the futility of prayer and worship. Among the publications that carried his message, the important were *Kudiyarasu, Puratchi* and *Viduthalai*. An outstanding rationalist of modern times, Ramasswami Naicker, concealed in his bearded bodily frame an unfailing compassion for the untouchables and an iron determination to fight the social maladies. As a reward for his conviction and mission, he suffered imprisonment on several occasions.

6. *Justice Party Year Book*, Madras, 1929, pp. 110-131.

Through the organisation of the Dravida Kazhagam, E. V. R. sought to give an application to his concepts. Elected as President of the Justice Party in 1938, he reorganised this party into Dravida Kazhagam.[7] At a conference held at Salem in 1944, the party adopted the slogan of a separate Dravida-nadu to comprise the four linguistic areas of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Desa, Karnataka and Kerala.[8] A black flag, which indicated the sorrow of the Dravidians with a red circle, which denoted the hope of the people, was accepted as its symbol. In a conference of the party at Tiruchirapalli the Dravida Writers' Association, the Dravida Students' Association and Black Shirts were organised. The numerous branches of the party spread the ideals of free thinking and created a new awakening in the land. The movement gained a large following-among them were Soundara Pandya Nadar, C. N. Annadurai, V. V. Ramasami and M. Karunanidhi.

The consequences of the movement were of great magnitude, for rationalism assumed strength and the people developed a general disregard for temples, priests, dogmas and rites. This led to the liberation of large sections of the people from the clutches of the spirituals. A new anxiety was conveyed for the welfare of the down trodden and the untouchables. As a result, legislations were enacted for the welfare of the depressed communties. The Hindu Marriages (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act of 1967 granted legal sanction to the self respect marriages. This was a significant development, for it accepted the equality of woman with man and minimised the expenses of marriages.[9] Culturally, it strengthened the Tamil renaissance. Determined attempt was made to promote a pure Tamil literature, to liberate Tamil from Sanskricti influences, to resist the imposition of Hindi and to popularise the Dravidian arts, dance and music. Politically, the movement

7. E. V. Ramaswami, *Namathu Kurikkol*, Madras, 1948, p. 36.
8. A. S. Venu, *Dravidastan*, Madras, 1954, p. 28.
9. K. Thangavelu, *Thamizh Nila Varalaru*, Madras, 1976, pp. 452-475.

served as the base for the emergence of new organisations. The Brahmins were swept out of political authority and the Dravidians captured the commanding heights of state politics in subsequent times.

In fact the Nadar Movement and the Self Respect Movement marked two distinct stages in the struggle of the common people for social emancipation. While one struggle was restricted to the southern region, the other spread beyond the state. By and large the Nadar Movement was directed against the caste Hindu tyranny. Its leadership came from the rank and file, it aimed at social equality and transformed into a violent struggle. But the Dravidian Movement was directed against Brahminical domination, aimed at the liberation of the mind from intellectual slavery and adopted non-violent methods. However, it lost much of its character with the rise of the D.M.K.[10] Since the split the leadership came from the non-Tamils and the caste Hindus and hence it came in the way of the transfer of influence from the caste Hindus to the downtrodden majority. This ensured for the high castes and the non-Tamils continued ascendancy in society, economy and politics. More sacrifices were required of the 'untouchables' in their march towards social equality.

10. Annadurai at the Salem Conference in 1944 moved a resolution against seeking election and it was accepted. (*Namathu Kurikkol* pp. 44-46). But he discarded this principle, when he launched D. M. K. Further he wanted wealthy and influential people from the Justice Party to join the organisation. But E. V. R. wanted to keep them out, for he rightly pointed out there was no difference between non-Brahmin Justicites and non-Brahmin Congressites, for both of them stood for Brahmin priests, temples, puranas and smritis. This accounted for the reactionary trend in the D. M. K. (M. R. Barnett, *The Politics of Cultural Nationalism in South India*. Princeton, 1976, pp. 65-66 and *Dravidanadu*, Madras, 20 June 1943).

Chapter XXIX

SPREAD OF THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

The Dravidian-Aryan rift presented impediments to the consolidation of nationalist forces. Taking advantage of the co-operation extended by the Justice Party and the situation created by the First World War, the British administration made a determined effort to curb the spread of the freedom movement. It launched coercive measures, banned meetings and curtailed the freedom of the press. At the same time the Government of India Act of 1919 gave no satisfaction to the country. The Muslim population was agitated over the British occupation of the places held as sacred and the humiliation of the Caliph of Turkey. The enactment of the Rowlatt Act and the massacre at Jallianwallahbagh were followed by repression, almost unparallelled in its terror.[1] A wave of deep seated agony and revulsion spread over the country. The Tamils, as the people elsewhere in the land, were not prepared to compromise with such an intolerable situation. However, the Gandhian tactics of advance as well as return created ups and downs in the history of the movement.

Non-Co-operation

In 1920 in an atmosphere of resentment the National Congress met in a special session at Calcutta. A resolution moved by M. K. Gandhi demanded swaraj and suggested Non-Co-operation with the administration for the attainment of it. The regular session of the Congress that met at Nagpur in the same year ratified this decision of the party. The Non-Co-operation Movement envisaged a two fold programme, one constructive and the other non co-operative. The constructive programme aimed at bringing about a social change through the encouragement of the use of swadeshi goods,

1. R.C. Majumdar, (ed.) *Struggle for Freedom*, Bombay, 1969, pp. 306-307.

prohibition of the consumption of intoxicants, removal of untouchability, promotion of communal unity and the establishment of national schools. The non-co-operation programme aimed at the attainment of responsible government through disobedience to unjust laws, refusal to pay taxes, resignation of offices and boycott of legislatures, courts and schools.

Certain leaders voiced their opposition to this move. Annie Besant feared that it would destroy law and order in the country. M. A. Jinnah declared that the Gandhian method of struggle created conflicts in the society and would lead the country to disaster.[2] V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyar considered non co-operation as mystical and suggested co-operation with the British in the working of the reforms and for the gradual attainment of self government.[3] S. Satyamurti questioned the wisdom of boycott of councils. He favoured entry so that legislatures could be wrecked from inside. At a political conference that was held at Tirupur in 1922 he moved a resolution for removing the ban on council entry but C. Rajagopalachari managed to thwart it. Among the news papers *The Hindu* refused its support to non co-operation.[4] To counter this stand C. Rajagopalachari published the *Swarajya* with T. Prakasam as editor, as a rival to *The Hindu* While C R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Jayakar favoured council entry, Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhai Patel and Rajagopalachari opposed it. Thereupon in 1923 C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the Swaraj Party on the issue of council entry. The new party gained the support of the Brahmin nationalists of the Tamil Country.[5]

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 336-338.
3. E. S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, London, 1930.
4. M. K. Gandhi suggested to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Rangaswamy Iyengar to print nationalist literature in their news paper, *The Hindu*. But they protested that they invested one or two lakhs on their press and that confiscation would ruin them. (Government of Madras, 24 April 1919, Public G. O. No. 222).
5. R. Parthasarathi, *S. Satyamurthi*, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 24-27.

The National Congress launched the Non-Co-operation Movement in an atmosphere of despair and hope. The news paper, *Tamil Nadu*, published from Salem, wrote: "We have commenced a war of liberty. Hence every man and woman above the age of 18 should march to the forefront of the battle, bearing the arms of truth, non-violence and self denial". The people responded to the call with considerable enthusiasm. They hoisted national flags, installed photographs of national leaders even on temple cars and organised demonstrations. Several leaders renounced titles, that they received from the alien rulers, resigned the posts that they held and joined the movement.[6] The boycott of foreign goods, strikes in mills and prevention of the auction of liquor shops caused considerable loss of revenue to the rulers. In Madurai the Kallars agitated against registration under the Criminal Tribes Act and the political prisoners staged a demonstration.[7] At numerous places the nationalists boycotted the schools and courts and refused the payment of taxes. Hartals, processions and meetings marked a routine feature of the agitation. The Prince of Wales arrived at Madras on 13th January 1922. The Justicites extened a welcome but the nationalists observed a hartal.[8] On his way from the habour to Government House volunteers obstructed his way, stoned tram cars and clashed with the Justicites. In the police firing two were killed and several injured.[9] As a result of this movement nationalism gained strength, the Congress extened its influence and the people developed a spirit of resistance.

6. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 19 February 1920.
7. *Ibid.*, 1 February 1923 and 16 May 1923.
   The volunteers at Bhuvanagiri in Chidambaram threatened the customers to toddy shops with donkey rides to the accompaniment of music and drums. At Annivar in Villupuram they tied a shoe and broom stick before a shop and threatened the customers to decorate with. (B. S. Baliga, *South Arcot District Gazetteer*, Madras, 1962, p. 97).
8. *The Hindu*, Madras, 15 January 1922.
9. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 20 January 1922 and 1 February 1922.

In an attempt to suppress the movement the British released the forces of repression. Lathi charges, arrests, imprisonment and shooting were resorted to on an extensive scale against the nationalists. Early in 1922 the *Navasakti* reported: "The signs of the present times are bad enough. Repressive measures are progressing fast like the hot morning sun". The political prisoners were singled out for harrassment. They were kept handcuffed in hot sun, housed with scavengers and lepers and served with dirty water and poor food. While repression had its natural impact upon the agitation, several factors weakened the movement. The Justice Party and its news papers supported the British. Large sections of the Dravidians kept out of the struggle, for many looked upon it as a Brahmin stir. M. K. Gandhi and other leaders toured the country but they failed in removing popular apprehensions. For, the news paper, *Justice*, reported : At a meeting on the Marina on 8 April, 1921 Gandhi was surrounded by Brahmin men and women. It was presided over by a local Brahmin. A band of Brahmins came to the meeting singing hymns. They broke coconut in front of Gandhi, burnt camphor and presented him with holy water. Thereupon "not knowing even the elements of Dravidian languages and Dravidian history, this Gujarathi gentleman extolled the Brahmins to the skies at the expense of the Non Brahmins and the Brahmins present must have been supremely pleased and elated. They must have thought that the whole world was at their feet begging for a divine morsel of knowledge from them".[10] To add to the embarrassment of the nationalists the Muslims too lost interest in the struggle. As Kemal Pasha of Turkey abolished the Caliphate, they found it no more necessary to continue the agitation for a cause that was lost. Apart from these factors, internal conflicts in the Congress weakened the movement. While the radicals considered the non co-operation as ineffective, the moderates believed in the virtue of association with the British. The pro-changers demanded council entry but the no changers opposed it. These contradictions rendered the Non-Co-operation Movement unsustainable.

10. *The Justice*, Madras, 9 April 1921.

As the movement was heading towards an inevitable collapse, M. K. Gandhi decided to utilise the opportunity presented by the Chauri Chaura incident to suspend the agitation in February 1922. Greatly provoked by police excesses, an angry mob set fire to a police station with some policemen locked inside at Chauri Chaura in U.P.[11] Many of the nationalists welcomed the suspension of the agitation, but others condemned it as disappointing. Nevertheless this abrupt action caused considerable frustration among the Tamils. The Congress now returned to constructive programme. The Swarajists too lost their popularity. Their effort to wreck dyrachy from within the councils failed and their leader C. R. Das passed away in 1925. An official report on a meeting at Madras in 1925 reflected upon the new situation. "No hartals were held and only 200 people attended a beach meeting. Thereafter the agitators diverted their energies to the making of cloth".[12]

Boycott of Simon Commission

Despite the failure of the Non-Co-operation Movement, the news papers and freedom fighters kept alive the spirit of nationalism in the Tamil Country. In support of the struggle for freedom there came into existence a number of papers and periodicals. The important among them were *Sutandira Veeran, Sutandira Sangu, Vandemataram, Jaya Bharati,* and the *National Times*. The leaders who took asylum at Pondicherry printed and circulated patriotic songs. Among these collections the important were *Sutandira Natham* and *Desabhakta Geetham*. The news papers like *The Hindu* which followed a cautious policy survived the repression by the administration but the most ardent of the nationalist papers went out of circulation. In 1925 the Congress celebrated a National Week from 6th April to 13th. At meetings held during this week volunteers sung patriotic songs and recalled the tales of sacrifices made by the freedom fighters. The news papers extended their support.[13] In 1927

11. R. Parthasarathi, *op. cit.* p. 24.
12. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 15 April 1925.
13. *Ibid.*, 17 April 1925.

the Congress volunteers organised a satyagraha for the removal of statue of Colonel Neill, a general of the Rebellion of 1857, erected at Madras.[14] Many were arrested, yet the statue was broken.[15]

In 1927 the British Government appointed the Indian Statutory Commission headed by Sir John Simon to investigate into the working of dyrachy and to suggest constitutional changes. However, the Congress resented its all white composition and at its session at Madras in 1927 it decided to boycott it.[16] The Tamilnad Congress Committee and the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee also decided to conduct boycott demonstration.[17] At Madras the nationalists formed the Simon Boycott Propaganda Committee with S. Satyamurti as president to carry on propaganda and organise a hartal on the day of arrival of the commission. It appealed to the students to abstain from classes, the shop keepers to close their shops, the lawyers not to appear in courts and the commuters not to travel in trains. All were required to hoist national flag as well as black flag[0] with 'boycott' inscribed on it.[18]

On February 18, 1929 the Simon Commission landed at Madras. As in the rest of the country this was greeted with demonstrations. In the resultant disorder the Europeans were attacked and the demonstrators were lathi-charged. The police raided the houses and arrested the leaders. The British persuaded the anti-national individuals and parties to accord welcome to the Commission. As the *Ten Nadu* reported: the Government patronised leaders with no followers, preachers with no audience and self seekers with no self respect.[19] These people even appreared before

14. Report on the Administration of Madras Presidency, 1926-27, p. 14.
15. Government of Madras, Public Confidential, 15 May 1930, G. O. 275 A.
16. *The Hindu*, Madras, 9 April 1928.
17. *Congress Sitanagaram*, Madras, 22 January 1929.
18. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 3 January 1928.
19. *Ten Nadu*, Krishnagiri, 19 December, 1929.

the Commission and presented welcome addresses. On behalf of Madras Corporation A. Ramaswami Mudaliar of the Justice Party welcomed the Commission.[20] The nationalists on the other hand, as decided by the Congress Party, organised hartals. Shops were closed, black flags were raised and demonstrations were held. The British faced this situation with repression, assault, false cases of sedition and imprisonment.[21] *The Andhra Patrika* reported: "Stones were pelted, Heads broken, Blood flowed. Every kind of confusion followed".[22] The people were agitated as repression followed wherever the Commission went.[23]

Transformation of Congress

The period of the Non-Co-operation Movement witnessed the steady transformation of the Congress Party in Tamil Nadu from a group of the Brahmin elite to a party of the Tamils. Through the constructive programme, formulated by M. K. Gandhi, the popular agitations that the party leaders organised and the self sacrifice that the volunteers suffered, the Congress proved itself acceptable to the masses. In the mean time the internal conflicts in the ranks of the Brahmin elite as well as the Dravidian aristocrats weakened the communal forces. The Tamil Brahmins and the Telugu Brahmins came into conflict with each other over positions and influence. The bitter rivalry between their respective leaders, S. Satyamurti and T. Prakasam represented this trend.[24] Among the Tamil Brahmins too here developed dissensions, for a report of 1931 indicated that Satyamurti was very jealous of the influence of C. Rajagopalachari. Their rivalry ultimately contributed to the rise of K. Kamaraj, a Dravidian leader. The Justice Party entered the road to decline. In its ranks there developed cracks due to Tamil-Telugu, 'high caste' - 'low

20. *Alkalam*, Bangalore, 26 February 1929.
21. *Tamil Nadu*, Madras, 21 December 1928.
22. *Andhra Patrika*. Madras, 16 February 1929.
23. One of the members of the Commission was Clement Attlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1947.
24. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 17 June 1927.

caste and Hindu-Muslim discord. In an attempt to overcome the internal contradictions it permitted the Brahmins to join it and its members to join the Congress. In 1923 two prominent leaders of the Justice Party, R. K. Shanmugam Chetty and Varadarajulu Naidu went over to the Congress at the invitation of C. R. Das.[25] This trend helped in the transformation of the Congress into a mass movement. Among the other Dravidian leaders Kalyanasundara Mudaliar endeavoured to gain Dravidian support to the Congress. Popularly called Thiru Vi Ka, he was an ardent patriot, a Tamil scholar and well known journalist. In his Tamil news paper, *Navasakti*, he attacked the Justice Party as responsible for creating dissensions in the society and declared that the Brahmins were not responsible for the backwardness of the Dravidians.[26] With more Dravidians in the Congress Party, it became possible for E. V. Ramaswami Naicker to get elected as President of the Provincial Congress in 1922. When the issue of council entry created a controversy several Brahmin leaders of the party particularly S. Srinivasa Aiyangar and K. Bashyam Aiyangar resigned their positions. In 1931 the Tamilnad Congress Committee elected C. Rajagopalachari as President, S. Satyamurti as Vice President and K. Kamaraj as one of the members of the executive. As a result the Congress gave strong leadership to the movement.[27]

Issue of complete Independence

The Indian National Congress at its session at Madras in 1927 set complete independence as the goal of India. It appointed a committee presided over by Motilal Nehru to examine the issue of constitutional reform. However in its report, called Nehru Report, the committee laid down dominion status and not complete independence as India's political objective. This represented a climb down and came as a big disappointment to the politically conscious nationalists.

25. *Ibid.*, 17 May 1931.
26. *Swadesamitran*, Madras, 24 November 1917.
27. A. Ramaswami (ed.) *Ramanathapuram District Gazetteer*, Madras, 1972, p. 115.

Though the Congressites generally welcomed the decision, the ardent nationalists condemned it. Their demand for complete independence as the goal of India created a cleavage in the party.[28] *The Congress Sitanagaram* on 18th December 1928 deplored the defeatist attitude of the Nehru Committee. In no unambiguous terms it declared: "While the Madras Congress had clearly stated that complete national independence was the ideal of India, it is deplorable that the Nehru Committee should have prepared its scheme having for its basis the ideal of dominion status. The youths in the Congress can never rest content with the dominion status. Complete independence alone is their goal. When a dependent country desires dominion status, it only means that it is submitting to slavery under a foreign government".[29]

In view of the dissatisfaction that manifested itself among the nationalists the Congress at its Lahore session in 1929 adopted a resolution on independence as the goal of India. It also decided to observe the 26th of January as the day of complete independence. Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Congress, hoisted the tricolour flag of independence at Lahore on the bank of the Ravi. A resolution moved by M.K. Gandhi demanded the reduction of land tax, prohibition of liquor and abolition of salt tax. However the British Government rejected these demands. In protest against the attitude of the British and for the attainment of independence the Congress Working Committee called upon the people to organise and undertake civil disobedience.[30]

Civil Disobedience

Through Civil Disobedience the Congress aimed at the destruction of dyarchy by means of power, generated through

28. Government of Madras, Report on the Administration of Madras Presidency, 1927-8, p. 11.
29. *Congress Sitanagaram*, Madras, 18 December 1928.
30. R. C. Majumdar, (ed.) *Struggle for Freedom*, Bombay, 1969, pp. 467-8.

political agitation and constructive work. In response to the decision of the party early in 1930 the Tamilnad Congress Committee constituted a council of action with S. Satyamurti as president for staging the civil disobedience.[31] In Madras the city boycott committee directed the picketing of shops and boycott of foreign goods.[32] The movement began on 11 March 1930 with salt satyagraha but it had a chequered history. Since then the British Government published the Simon Commission Report, which favoured greater participation of the people in government and replacement of dyarchy by autonomy in the provinces. Under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact the people were permitted to make salt for domestic purposes and to picket liquor shops peacefully. Now Gandhi suspended civil disobedience and attended the Second Round Table Conference, 1931. The British Government rejected his demand for complete independence. Lord Willington, who succeeded Lord Irwin as Viceroy, executed Bhagat Singh, Rajaguru and Sukhadev, who were convicted in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, jailed M. K. Gandhi and S.C. Bose and launched repression. Provoked by these atrocities, the nationalists in January 1932 resumed the movement with vigour.[33]

March to Vedaranyam

In March 1930 C. Rajagopalachari, President of the Tamilnad Congress Committee, moved his headquarters from Madras and made Tiruchirapalli the centre of civil disobedience operations. The Congress Committee decided to defy the salt laws at Vedaranyam, an out of the way village situated in the sandy region of Point Calimere but favourably situated near a salt factory. As it was also a place of pilgrimage, the movement assumed a religious colour too. C. Rajagopalachari was made the dictator of the movement. T. S. S. Rajan was placed in charge of a committee and

31. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 20 December 1930.
32. *Ibid.*, 17 May 1931.
33. *Swarajya*, Madras, 24 March 1931.

C. Swaminatha Chetty in charge of the organisation work.[34] The idea was to defy law and discredit the British authority, marking the beginning of civil disobedience in Tamil Nadu.

The organisers held a large public meeting at Tiruchirapalli on the 13th of March 1930. It was addressed by Rajagopalachari and T.S.S. Rajan. About a thousand volunteers came forward but the organisers selected only one hundred to be sent in batches. An advance batch singing patriotic songs went round and collected donations. The route chosen was from Tiruchirapalli via Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Mannargudi and Tiruturaipundi to Vedaranyam. C. Rajagopalachari, led the first batch. He decided to begin the march on 13th April-an auspicious day, being the Tamil New Year Day and Jallinwalabagh Day, for the commencement of the march. Joined by volunteers from Ceylon, Burma, Madras and Bombay, the satyagrahis marched from Tiruchirapalli on the appointed day to coincide with Gandhi's march to Dandi. Namakkal V. Ramalingam Pillai composed a song for the occasion:

> "Here comes a war without blood, without sword,
> All those who believe in the eternity of Truth, join."[35]

The British administration warned the inhabitants against providing hospitality to the satyagrahis, yet did not seek to arrest the leaders before the actual breach of salt laws. The first batch consisting of ninety nine volunteers reached Kovilodi on the 14th evening. As the great chatram was found bolted, all rested on a river bed, while Rajaji in the house of an Ayyangar. The march continued through Thiruvadi, Thanjavur and Kumbakonam. Those who extended hospitality were

34. J. A. Thorne, District Magistrate, letter to Madras, 1 Jan. 1931, Civil Disobedience Movement, Strictly Confidential, pp. 155.
35. S. Ranganathan, District Magistrate, 5 Jan. 1931, letter to Madras, Civil Disobedience Movement, 1930-21, Strictly confidential, pp. 156-57.

arrested. On the 30th the volunteers went through the process of collecting salt. Thereupon Rajaji was arrested and sentenced for six months in jail at Tiruchirapalli. Now S. Satyamurti became the next dictator, while K. Santanam took up the leadership at Vedaranyam. Parties of volunteers went to the swamp and collected salt; but police recovered it. On the 3rd of May all were permitted to collect as much salt as possible; but a surprise raid was made and leaders were arrested. A big storm on the 5th prevented further saline operations. Volunteers organised meetings but crowds were dispersed through lathi charges. On the 29th the police raided the central camp at Tiruchirapalli, arrested 135 Congress men and dismantled the camp. T. S. S. Rajan too was arrested and sent to prison for one year. To this movement Madurai supplied the largest number of volunteers.[36]

The satyagrahis violated the salt laws at other centres too. At Udayavanam, Madras, T. Prakasam and K. Nageswara Rao set up a camp but the police arrested the leaders on the 16th of April, raided the camp and broke it up. This was followed by hartal in the city. On 27th April 1930 the police came into clash with a large crowd at Tiruvallikkeni. The fighting lasted for three hours, culminating in firing. According to administrator's report, which is usually not near to truth, it caused seven casualities, three of them fatal.[37] On 28th May volunteers manufactured salt at Rameswaram but were arrested.[38] Attempt was made from April to June to make salt on the coastal areas of Ovary, Anjengo, Veppalodai, Tutukudi and Tharuvaikulam but were frustrated.[39] At these centres the patriots chanted:

36. J. A. Thorne, District Magistrate, January, 1, Civil Disobedience Movement, Strictly Confidential, pp. 163-64.
37. E. J. Rawlandson, Commissioner, Police, January 5, 1931, Civil Disobedience Movement, Strictly Confidential, pp. 163-64.
38. H. S. Shield, 3 January 1931, Civil Disobedience Movement, p. 150.
39. Visvanatha Rao, District Magistrate, 6 January, 1931, Civil Disobedience Movement p. 168.

"Let us march-
March to the sea shore to make salt".[40]

Determined to carry the struggle to success, the patriots employed different methods. They sought the support of all sections of the population, particularly the public servants, workers, peasants and students. Their attempt to draw the police to the movement failed but the students joined the struggle in strength.[41] Meetings, satyagraha, hartal, picketing, staging of dramas and singing of patriotic songs formed the different manifestations of popular resentment. There emerged several orators through street corner meetings. The noted were Theagaraja Siva, Muthusami Asari, Konda and Muthuswami Tevar. Esakkia Pillai was a well known singer of patriotic songs. Among the different themes of dramas and songs were victory of the charka, use of khaddar and martyrdom of patriots. When the volunteers sang patriotic songs, they span with the *thaklis*. Swadeshi dramas and flag salutations too were popular. Through these channels there spread a patriotic fervour.

When nationalism assumed vigour, the British administration reacted with increased rigour. The police forces lathi charged the volunteers, broke the meetings and even resorted to firing. On 11 March 1930 the workers organised a meeting at Choolai, Madras, in protest against the torturing of satyagrahis. Police intervened, opened fire and left at least three dead and many injured.[42] On 17 July 1930 the

40. Ma Po Sivagnanam, *Viduthalai Poril Thamizh Valarndha Varalaru*, Madras, 1970, p. 24.
41. The call to the students to join the struggle had a mixed action. *Lokahitaishi*, published from Bangalore warned: "The Roundheads of Cromwell were never recruited from the student class, nor did America throw off British yoke through juvenile aid. Lenin and Trotsky never relied on school boys in their bloody struggle for setting up the Soviet. Then why do our leaders in India seduce our young men in their scramble for power ?". (*Lokahitaishi*, Bangalore, 20 February 1929.)
42. Government of Madras, Public Confidential, G. O. No.275 A, 15 May 1930.

volunteers picketed the toddy shops at Madurai. As the mob attempted to set fire to shops, police resorted to shooting, as the result of which many died. On 6 August 1930 more people were killed at Madurai.[43] At Tirupur on 11 January 1932 the police attacked a procession, carrying national flags and singing national songs. As a result of the lathi charge, Tirupur Kumaran died. Many nationalists were convicted for their service to the country and sent to jail.[44] In the meantime the British sought to create dissensions among the people. As part of their programme, they encouraged loyalist gatherings, employed hooligans to disturb nationalist meetings, celebrated the Emperor's birth day and supported anti-nationalist news papers. Several anti-nationalists took service with them for praising the virtues of British rule, the most prominent of these paid—agents was Kasinatha Pillai.[45] The nationalist press was black listed and denied of advertisements. The *Dravidian*, the *Navasakti*, the *Dotiyan*, the *Swadesamitran*, the *Swatandira Sangu* and *Sukhodayam*- all Tamil news papers-were placed on the black list.[46]

However, at the psychological moment the Congress failed the nation again. In May 1934 by an understanding with the Congress, the British Government agreed to withdraw repression. Accordingly, Gandhi called off the agitation

43. J. T. Hall, letter to Madras, 9 January 1931, Civil Disobedience Movement, Strictly Confidential, pp. 137-139.

44. Jamadagiri Naicker of Arakonam, on being sentenced for imprisonment declared: "Even in my death bed I will only endeavour to destroy the system of government which clad in cloths wet with the warm blood of the Indians, (*Congress Sitanagaram*, 29 January 1929.)

Subramania Siva who was imprisoned at Madurai Jail, had to sleep on a bare ground with an empty stomach, with all his clothing removed and his hands hand cuffed (*Swadesamitran*, Madras 7 November, 1921.)

45. Visvanatha Rao, District Magistrate, Report 6, January 1931, Civil Disobedience, Strictly Confidential, pp. 171-172.

46. Government of Madras, Public Confidential, G. O 629, 17 March 1930 and No. 1622, 23 December, 1930.

As a result, the struggle was not carried to its logical end.[47]

In 1935 Parliament at London enacted the Government of India Act. As recommended by the Simon Commission, it replaced dyarchy by autonomy in the provinces. The Act introduced significant changes in the constitution of the provincial government. The legislature was made bicameral-it was to consist of a legislative council and a legislative assembly. A council of ministers, that was made responsible to the legislature, was to administer provincial subjects. However, the powers of the council of ministers were subjected to constitutional safeguards and governor's special responsibilities. In the election that was held in 1937 the Congress Partyenteredthe contest and came to power at Madras.

47. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 16 April 1934.

Chapter XXX

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE BRITISH

The English East India Company completed the formation of Madras Presidency by 1801. This province consisted of Tamil Nadu and parts of Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Desa and Orissa. The capital was at Madras. One of the most extensive provinces of British India, it was divided into districts and district into taluqs. To begin with the Company relied upon local traditions and commercial establishments for the administration of this province. However, in course of time it attempted improvements and created a centralised system.

The Governor and Council

The Governor and his Ccuncil consisting of three members looked after the administration of the Presidency. They held office for a period of five years, carried out the orders of the Court of Directors and administered the offairs of the province through their own agencies. The Madras Presidency remained independent of the other presidencies, Bengal and Bombay, and corresponded directly with the Ccurt of Directors at London. But the Regulating Act of 1773 granted authority to the Governor General in Council of Bengal to superintend the affairs of Madras Presidency in the making of war and settlement of peace, except in case of any imminent necessity or instruction from the home government at London. The Charter Act of 1833, which named the Governor General of Bengal as Governor General of India, empowered his Council to legislate for Madras and other presidencies. The Indian Councils Act of 1861 restored the legislative authority to the Madras Council, yet it was subject to the veto of the Governor General.

The Government of India Act of 1919 introduced dyarchy in the provinces. The powers were divided into reserved subjects, which were placed under the control of the Governor in Council and the transferred subjects, which were placed

under the control of the Governor acting with his Indian ministers. The Governor was given the right to act on his own authority and responsibility in the case of measures, which in his judgement affected the safety, transquility and interests of the province or any part there of. The Madras Council, now called Executive Council, held office for a period of five years It was allotted its own sources of revenue, of which land revenue, excise and stamps formed the principal items. Among the heads of expenditure were police, general administration, education and public health.

The Government of India Act of 1935 introduced provincial autonomy in Madras as in other presidencies. Accordingly, the provincial government derived its powers not from the Central Government, as it had been hitherto, but from the constitution, that was provided in the Act. The Governor, as the chief executive authority, exercised his powers either directly or through a Council of popular ministers. His powers were of three categories—those exercised at his discretion, those exercised in consultation with his ministers and those exercised on the advice of the ministers. If the Governor was satisfied that a situation had arisen in which the provincial government could not be carried on according to the provisions of the constitution. he could assume to himself all the powers of the provincial government except of the High Court. A proclamation issued to this effect could remain in force for six months and could be extended by Parliament for a period of twelve months. In the exercise of his powers the Governor was assisted and advised by a Council of Ministers, whom he appointed from among the members of the legislature. The ministers held office during his pleasure but the legislature could remove them through a non-confidence motion.[1]

The Legislature

The Indian Councils Act of 1861 created the Legislative

1. *Asylum Almanack and Directory of Madras and South India.* Madras, 1932, pp. 203-210.

Council of Madras. It consisted of the ordinary members of the Governor's Executive Council, the Advocate General and four to eight additional members. This council was so small that it was described as a mere committee for the purpose of making law. Further, its powers were so limited that it could not even question the conduct of the executive. At the most it was a committee for registering the orders of the government. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 increased the strength of the additional members from eight to twenty but the official majority continued as before. The new council could discuss the budget but could not vote upon it.

The Indian Councils Act of 1909 improved the status of the Council. It increased its strength to forty two additional members, besides the ordinary members of the Executive Council. The elective principle received acceptance, for twenty one out of forty two additional members were to be elected. Though the official majority was abandoned, the government could command a majority with the help of officials and nominated non-officials. The Act permitted the members to move resolutions and to raise supplementary questions.

The Government of India Act of 1919 was of importance, for it raised the Executive Council with some additional members to that of a separate body with a distinct responsibility. It consisted of the members of the Executive Council, thirty nominated members and ninety eight elected members. Elections to the Legislative Council were based on property qualifications. The Governor appointed ministers from among the members of the Council. Subject to the authority of Parliament and general policy of the government, the Council could make laws for the peace and good of the province and levy taxes in the areas allotted to it. However, the Governor held discretionary powers to restrict legislation and overriding powers in financial matters.

The Government of India Act of 1935 enlarged the authority of the provincial legislature. It created a bicameral

legislature, consisting of the Legislative Council and the Assembly. The Council was a permanent body, with one third of its members retiring every third year, while the Assembly held office for a period of five years. Elections were held on the basis of property, educational or other special qualifications and communal representation. The legislature made laws on matters of local interest like village administration and public health but could not legislate on issues like sovereignty of the crown, discriminating against British subjects and in conflict with federal authority.[2] Despite its limited powers, the legislature came to assume greater importance.

The Judiciary

The legislation of 1861 reorganised the judicial administration of the Presidency. Together with this, a civil and criminal procedure code was adopted. The High Court that was established at Madras absorbed the Supreme Court and the Sadr and Foujdari Adalat. The new court consisted of a Chief Justice and not more than twenty judges. The zillah civil and sessions judges were appointed as district and sessions judges. The collectors acted as district magistrates for the districts, while the tahsildars as sub magistrates for the taluq. The combination of executive and judicial powers in the collectors and the tahsildars contributed to administrative arrogance and worked against rights of the inhabitants.[3] In consequence during the Struggle for Freedom the popular leaders and the news papers demanded the separation of the executive and judicial powers. Accordingly in 1892 the Madras Government appointed stationary sub magistrates to exercise magisterial powers, so long exercised by the tahsildars. However, this principle was not extended to the district level for fear of weakening the powers of the executive and of adding to public

2. Coupland, R. *India, A Restatement*, London, 1945, pp. 159-161.
3. H. H. Dodwell (ed.) *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI, Cambridge 1932, p. 268.

expenditure.[4]

The Departments of Administration

The Government took particular attention to appoint competent officials to run the departments. The civil service consisted of the Indian civil service and the Madras civil service. The first one was the representative of the merchants, factors and writers employed under covenant during the Company's administration. Until 1919 persons were recruited to this service only at London so as to give preference to white people. Since then recruitment was made both in England and in India. The Madras Provincial Service was created in 1892. It comprised deputy collectors, magistrates, subordinate judges and district munsifs, recruited through competitive examinations or promotions from subordinate services. Once recruited to these services, these officials lived the life of virtual nabobs. Wielding vast influence, enjoying heavy pay and seeking all comforts, they lived in a world of their own, different from the world of misery in which the vast majority of the population languished. In consequence the elite, instead of moving to industry and agriculture for making contributions to the welfare of the society, preferred these services with a view to controlling the starving masses.

The Secretariat functioned at Fort St. George. It consisted of a Chief Secretary and seven secretaries to the government. Ordinarily each secretary had an under secretary and one or more assistant secretaries. The Chief Secretary dealt with the matters relating to the public, judicial, political and ecclesistical departments. The other secretaries dealt with revenue, law, finance, education, agriculture, public health, public works and the like.

Among the departments, revenue and police received special importance, for one dealt with collection of money and

4. B. S. Baliga, *Studies in Madras Administration*, Vol. II, Madras, 1960. pp. 548.

the other with exercise of authority. In 1786 the English East India Company constituted the Board of Revenue with three members. It exercised control over revenue affairs and religious endowments. The collectors who first appeared on the scene in 1787 were placed in charge of the districts. The sub collectors who were appointed in 1792 were assigned groups of taluqs.[5] The revenue administration was notorious for the different forms of extortion and embezzlement that it practised, yet it continued to wield vast influence.

The police force functioned under the Inspector General of Police, It consisted of the regular service, the Madras city police, the railway police, the criminal investigation department and the finger print bureau. The police officers received training at Vellore and the constables at Vellore or Coimbatore. For the purpose of police administration, the Presidency was divided into ranges, each range into districts and each district into divisions and each division into sections. The village watchmen, constables, inspectors, superintendents, magistrates and reserve police supplied a complex system of control but because of inner defects, it gained no confidence of the people. Several factors accounted for this sad situation. In many of the cases of crime the inhabitants made no reports to the police for fear that unless they paid bribes no action would be taken. When cattle theft was reported, it was certain that cattle would be killed for the suppression of evidence and therefore the affected people usually paid half of the price through the mediation of the *kavalkars* and recovered them. An impression gained ground that many of the police officials received bribes from interested parties and suppressed the crimes of theft and murder, which were so common during the British administration. For fear of falling victims to retaliation and to foisted cases, the affected people usually never dared to make appeals. Frequently, the police concocted evidences or introduced some stolen property or liquor bottles into the houses

5. H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI, p. 40.

of innocent people for securing convictions.[6] It so happened that innocent people turned into habitual offenders and murders became suicides.[7] However, it cannot be denied that the police force too suffered from severe distractions. Their salary was poor but their responsibility was heavy. They were required to render personal service to officers and were frequently called to the cities to escort the councillors and ministers and to guard the routes of their travel.

The jail establishment functioned under the control of the Inspector General of Prisons. Act V of 1869 classified the jails into central jails, district jails, subsidiary jails and special jails. The central jails were intended for habitual offenders and prisoners sentenced for rigorous imprisonment for one year or more. They were located at Tiruchirapalli, Coimbatore, Salem, Vellore and Madras.[8] In the district jails were confined the prisoners sentenced for imprisonment for period ranging from one month to twelve months. The subsidiary jails housed the prisoners who were committed to custody, penting trial and persons sentenced to imprisonment for a period up to a month. The special jail at Madras was intended for under-trial prisoners and the European Prison at Ootacamund for European and American convicts. Apart from these, there was a Borstpl School at Thanjavur and Reformatory School at Chengalpattu for young delinquents. The jailer, who was placed in charge of a prison, was expected to perform his duties with firmness, humanity and impartiality, to listen patiently to the grievances of the prisoners, abstain from irritating language and on no account strike or lay hands on any prisoner except in self

6. Report of Commissioners for the Investigation of Alleged Cases of Torture in the Madras Presidency 1855, Madras, pp, 9-12.
7. Police Committee, Statement on the Administration of the Madras City Police, 1902, pp. 34-40.
8. *Asylum Almanack and Directory of Madras and South India*, Madras, 1932, pp. 208-212.

defence.[9] But this maxim was usually violated. Nevertheless each jail was provided with library, workshop and medical as well as teaching staff. Remission of sentence upto three days a month was granted for good conduct of a convict and allowances were given for service in jails. Yet there were complaints against ill treatment, unhygienic conditions, eroded diet and incitement to quarrels between prisoners and physical harassment. The grievances of the prisoners received no serious attention.

In 1859 the Company's administration organised the Department of Public Instruction for taking care of education. It was headed by a Director of Public Instruction and was manned by a staff of deputies and inspectors.[10] The department was broadly divided into superior service and subordinate service. The Presidency was divided into circles, separately for boys as well as girls, and each circle was placed in charge of an inspector or inspectress of school. The sub-assistant inspectors or inspectresses assisted these officers. A Text Book Committee advised the Director in the preparation and publication of text books, and maintained an educational library for text books and an educational museum for models of school buildings, specimens of maps and diagrams and appliances needed for classes. Educational institutions were classified into private schools and public schools. The private schools were of two categories-recognised and unrecognised. Recognition was given, when a school conformed to the Madras Educational Rules, which dealt with such matters as qualifications of the staff, teacher-student ratio, accommodation and discipline. Public schools were classified on the basis of the standard of instruction provided. Accordingly there were elementary schools - lower and higher, secondary schools, arts colleges, - second grade and first grade-and professional colleges. While the second grade colleges offered courses up to

9. Rules for the Management and Superintendence of Jails in the Presidency of Fort St. George, Madras, 1883, pp. 1-32.
10. Collection of Despatches on Education, 1854-1868, para 17.

the intermediate, the first grade colleges upto B.A., B.Sc. or beyond. On the basis of the medium of instruction the schools were grouped into English and Vernacular. As English was made the official language, these schools were more popular than Tamil schools. In addition there came into existence technical schools, industrial schools and special schools, which were intended for aborginal and criminal tribes. Scholarships and stipends, though in a limited number, were offered to encourge the poor and the meritorious candidates. The department instituted public examinations at different stages and awarded diplomas.[11]

The Inspector General of Registration served as the head of the Registration Department. At different centres there were registration offices to register documents. Usually the parties were required to present as bribe currency notes together with documents; otherwise objections were raised. The Public Works Department was responsible for the construction and maintenance of public buildings, navigable canals, irrigation works and roads. At its head were two chief engineers, one in charge of buildings and roads and the other in charge of irrigation projects. The origin of this department is to be traced to the engineering branch of the Military Board established in 1786. Due to its efforts and because of the initiative of Sir Arthur Cotton several irrigation works were completed. Among them were the Upper and Lower Anicats on the Kaveri and the Periyar Dam.[12] Despite the utility of this department, it was considered as a citadel for the misappropriation of public funds. The engineers frequently colluded with the contractors in the division of spoils and grew rich at the expense of the exchequer. The companies working under governmental regulations operated the railways. The Labour Department, created in 1920, dealt with questions concerning

11. *Asylum Almanack and Directory of Madras and South India*, Madras, 1932, pp. 216-218.

12. H. H. Dodwell, (ed). *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI, p. 50.

the welfare of the workers, depressed classes and criminal tribes.

Local Administration

The British administration appreciated the importance of local self government. Accordingly, it created district boards for the districts, taluq boards for the taluqs and union boards for areas with urban features. By the Madras Local Boards Act of 1920 the local boards were given their own sources of revenue, separate functions and independent status. The district and taluq boards derived their income from a tax of one anna [13] in the rupee on the annual rent value of all occupied lands, situated in their limits. The union boards collected taxes on houses, professions, companies, pilgrims, markets ferries and tolls. The different local boards were required to construct and maintain local roads, bridges, hospitals, markets, schools, sanitary works, wells and drainage systems.

The municipal councils looked after the affairs in the town. They were given the freedom to fix the rates at which they could collect property and other taxes. In the city of Madras a Commissioner and a Council of fifty members administered the local affairs. The principal offices were the commissioner, revenue officer and engineer. Different standing committees looked after subjects like taxation, public works, health and education. By 1924 eighteen and a half per cent of the annual rental value of buildings and lands was levied as municipal tax in addition to other collections in Madras City.

The principal object for which the local bodies were constituted was to keep the areas clean. Whether it was the construction or maintenance of roads, the supply of water or protection against disease it was intended for providing a healthy atmosphere. But in practice the local bodies had be-

13. One rupee was exchanged for sixteen annas and one anna for twelve paise.

come tax collecting institutions and breeding grounds for corruption and mosquitoes. Influence and bribe to a large extent decided the amount of taxes to be paid for buildings and lands. Approval of new constructions were never extended usually unless presents were given to the building officers. Taxes were collected only to be distributed among the local servants. No funds were reserved for the provision of local aminities. In consequence drainage, water supply, markets and education were neglected unless additional funds were alloted by the provincial government.[14] In view of these mosquitoes and corrupt practices flourished side by side.

14. J. A. Jones, *Manual for District and Municipal Boards*, 1888, Madras, pp. 1-2.

Chapter XXXI

ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

The years from 1937 to 1947 marked a period of trial and hope in the history of the country. The National Congress decided to contest the election of 1937. It won the election in different provinces, assumed power and extended its co-operation to the British administration in the working of the reforms of 1935. This retreat from the traditional policy of non-co-operation came as a rude shock to the ardent nationalists. As the Congressites went out of the arena of conflict, the radicals including the Communists moved to spearhead the movement in the Tamil Country. However the situation changed after the outbreak of World War II in 1939. As Soviet Russia joined the camp of Great Britain and the United States the Communists too switched over their loyalty to British imperialism.

Despite the Japanese threat to India, Great Britain appeared reluctant to promise freedom to the country. The Congress now organised the Quit India Movement. Subhas Chandra Bose employed his Indian National Army against the British forces. Hindu-Muslim clashes too came, causing considerable blood-shed. Because of war effects food crops disappeared from market, prices of articles shot high and unemployment assumed ominous proportions. In this atmosphere of gloom Great Britain decided to leave India to her fate but in freedom.

Radical Movement

The radicals gained the ascendancy over the moderates in the Tamil Country with the collapse of the Civil Disobedience Movement. There began to appear a lot of literature on revolution and creation of a new order in India. The patriots composed songs on freedom and chanted at their meetings. Among these songs those on the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh

were the most moving. A Tamil work entitled *Thozhilalar Varga Pathai*, depicted the British Empire as the largest prison of the world. It called upon the people to pay no taxes, to destroy the governmental institutions, to attack police stations and army barracks and to rise in armed struggle for erecting a new India.[1] A. Muthiah Nadar published at Madurai a Tamil work, *Suthandira Murasu*, being a collection of freedom songs, composed by Sivakaminathan.[2] At Sivakasi, as the centre of activity, Doraiswamy Nadar, Danamoorthy Nadar and Ganapathy Nadar organised a revolutionary movement. They issued leaflets and operated underground. One of the leaflets, that the British seized, read:

> "Wake up brave youths
> We will dig the burial pit for Britain
> Long live Revolution, Long live Communism".[3]

On 12 May 1937 the revolutionaries planted a crude bomb at the Tirumala Nayak Palace, Madurai, where a coronation meeting was held and several British officials were witnessing an illumination. Manufactured out of gun powder and glass pieces, it was found concealed in a basket against the outer wall. However, it was detected on time and was removed.[4] In March 1941 when the police raided on suspicion a house at Perambur, Madras, it found concealed a large quantity of revolutionary literature and arrested underground leaders, who included Mohan Kumaramangalam, Subramania Sarma, Hanumantha Rao and Kunhappa Nambiar.[5] At Udumalpet Narasimha

1. Government of Madras, Public General, Confidential G. O. No. 2032, 17 September 1941.
2. Do, Miscellany Series, Confidential, G.O. 1967, 16 October 1937.
3. Do, Public General, Confidential, G. O. 380. 25 February 1941.
4. Government of Madras, Public General Miscellany Series, Confidential, G. O. 1747, 11 September 1937.
5. *Ibid.*, G. O. 573, 19 March 1941.
   Mohan Kumaramangalam, son of Dr. Subbarayan, became a minister in later years in Indira Gandhi's Congress ministry at New Delhi.

Naicker held a conspiracy for the destruction of British authority. However, in August 1942 he and his followers were apprehended at Coimbatore. They were sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment and jailed at Bellari. Narasimha Naicker was so badly tortured that he passed away shortly afterwards [6]

Failure of Congress

The outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 created a new situation in the country. Great Britain drew India into the arena of war neither with the approval of the Central Legislature nor with the consent of the political parties. Greatly agitated at this attitude of arrogance, the Congress declared: "the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people and they cannot permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends".[7] It called upon Great Britain to clarify the war aims, to tell of the new world order that was envisaged and to accept India's demand for independence. But there came no satisfactory response. Thereupon the party refused any support to the war effort and called upon the Congress ministries to relinquish offices. Accordingly at Madras the Rajaji ministry went out of power. This proved a wrong step, for it enabled the British to assume direct administration of the provinces and to promote war effort. James Hope, the Governor, took over the administration at Madras. In support of war effort he organised the National War Front, published a weekly called *Madras War Review* in Tamil as well as in English and organised an intense propaganda in support of the Allied Powers.[8] The Governor's war fund that was raised through persuation and threat reached two crores of rupees by February 1942.[9]

These unexpected developments threw the nationalists

6. *Ibid.*, G. O. 2550, 14 August 1947.
7. R. C. Majumdar (ed.). *Struggle for Freedom.* Bombay, 1969, pp. 624-625.
8. Government of Madras. Outline of the Administration, pp. 7-12.
9. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 5 February 1942.

into disarray. The Congress now launched individual satyagraha by its volunteers. In the different districts the agitators formed committees, issued anti war pamphlets, raised anti war slogans and organised pro-German meetings.[10] Satyagrahis from the Tamil districts went to Delhi to join the demonstrations.[11] On 26 January 1940 the people celebrated the 'Independence Day' on a grand scale. They hoisted national flag, burnt the effigy of British imperialism and held meetings.[12] The administration faced the situation through lathi charges and arrests. Numerous people courted arrest and imprisonment.

However, at the crucial moment Gandhi and his Congress again failed the nation. War clouds gathered ominously on the eastern horizon and it appeared that a Japanese invasion of India was imminent. Instead of taking advantage of Britain's entanglements, as the American colonists did, the Congressmen developed a sudden sympathy for the imperialists. Their philosophy was such that they again demonstrated their inability to carry the struggle to its logical end. By June 1940 Rajaji and his fellow Congressmen came out positively in support of Great Britain.[13] They also developed an illusion that because of the Japanese threat, the British would create a situation favourable for their return to power. Rajaji extended his support to the British war effort and declared that India would be more miserable under any other power.[14] While M. K. Gandhi conveyed his sympathy for Great Britain, Pandit Nehru offered unconditional support.[15] In January 1942 the Tamilnad Congress

10. *Ibid.*, Public, General, Confidential, Miscellaneous Series, G. O. 1422, 9 July, 1941.
11. *Ibid.*, G. O. 946, 8 May 1941.
12. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 3 February 1940.
13. *Ibid.*, 19 June 1940.
14. *Ibid.*,. 4 March 1942 and 20 March 1942.
15. In an interview with the Viceroy Gandhi observed: "I am not just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled". Nehru went a step further when he declared: "I should like India to play her full part and throw all her resources into the struggle for a new order". (Quoted in R. C. Majumdar, (ed.) *Struggle for Freedom*, p. 625).

Committee withdrew the agitation. The official report after this withdrawal of agitation stated that the usual Congress meetings continued to be held but the topics were experiences of political prisoners, constructive programme and defenceless state of the country. The issue of struggle for freedom did not figure.[16] The Congressmen now concentrated upon forming protection committees due to threat of war.[17]

War and Exodus

Immediately after the out break of war, Germany and Japan gained spectacular victories over the Allied Powers. Though the imperial forces made some progress in Libya, the success of the Japanese in South China Sea and Malaya more than overshadowed it. By January 1942 the Japanese forces overran a large part of Malaya and their bombers attacked Burma. The people of the Tamil Country, as the inhabitants elsewhere did, followed these international developments with interest as well as anxiety. Though Rajaji and his followers extended their support to Great Britain, the Tamils at large cherished a sympathy for the fellow Asiatic people, the Japanese. Reports came that they were kind to the Indians and a Tamil Chettiar was appointed as their High Commissioner in Burma.[18]

The administration took every possible effort to assure the public that Madras and other coastal towns were outside heavy bombing attacks. But the report on the advance of the Japanese, the arrival of air raid victims from abroad and the movement of the troops had a disturbing effect upon the coastal population. By January 1942 there began an exodus of people from the coast to the interior. To begin with it was mostly restricted to women and children.[19] The nationalists press, which languished during this period, blamed the British strategy in East Asia for continued

16. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, Strictly Confidential, 23 January, 1942.
17. *Ibid.*, 5 February 1942.
18. *Ibid.*, 29 March 1942.
19. *Ibid.*, 17 February, 1942.

reverses. It declared that had the people of Malaya been armed and had the resources of India been mobilised, the Japanese advance could have been checked.[20]

Since February 1942, the Allied Powers received more ominous tidings. The Japanese defeated the British in the great battle at Singapore and occupied the island, that was considered as invulnerable. They made rapid advance in Burma and launched a full scale attack on the Dutch East Indies. The evacuation of Rangoon by the British and the collapse of Dutch defences had a depressing effect upon the administration in India.[21] In March 1942 the people received the news that the Japanese air force attacked Colombo, Kakinada and Vizagapatnam. On 7th March a war plane approached Madras but dropped no bombs. These developments indicated that war was reaching close to India. On 11 April the army alerted the administration about the possibility of Japanese invasion of the east coast of South India.[22]

The Japanese threat threw the coastal towns into panic. In its wake there came house breaking and looting. Troops were brought for the defence of the coast but there were rumours that women were molested. In the midst of alarm and panic evacuees from Malaya and Burma reached the coast in increasing number. All these gave momentum to the exodus. By mid-February 1942 about one third of the population left Madras by road or rail. Other coastal towns experienced the same phenomenon, though not in major dimension. The Government ordered the early conduct of examinations so as to allow the students to join the exodus.[23] Also it suggested to the inhabitants, whose presence was not considered essential, to leave Madras as soon as possible. As a result there

20. *Ibid.*, 5 February 1942.
21. *Ibid.*, 20 March 1942.
22. *Ibid.*, 20 April 1942.
23. *Ibid.*, 17 February 1942 and 4 March 1942.

came rapid exodus and in six days about two lakhs of people left the city. A few transit camps were set up but they were found inadequate. As hotels and markets were closed down, scarcity for food was keenly felt The Madras Council continued to work from the city, but many of the offices were dispersed in the inland towns, particularly Chittoor. The administration came to be paralysed but Chittoor town received a momentary glory.[24]

Quit India Movement

In 1940 the House of Commons, London, held a three day debate on the war situation. The nationalists very much expected a word of hope but Prime Minister Winston Churchill maintained absolute silence on India. While the dominions like Canada and Australia were given representation on the War Cabinet at London and Pacific Board at Washington, the populous country of India was totally neglected. Greatly irritated, the nationalist press declared that Great Britain did not care for public opinion in this country.[25] However, the rapid advance made by the Japanese forces to the frontiers of India and the collapse of the British defences in the East convinced Prime Minister Churchill of the expediency of taking India into confidence. The Roosevelt administration in U. S. A. too persuaded Britain to adopt such a line of action. Accordingly on 11 March 1942 Churchill announced the Cripps Mission to India.[26] On the 23rd of March Stafford Cripps arrived at Delhi. His proposals centred on an offer of setting up an elected body, charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India. As this proposal appeared as a simple promise with no date fixed for implementation, the Congress Party as well as the Muslim League rejected it.

The country now witnessed spread of unrest in an

24. *Ibid.*, 20 April 1942.
25. Government of Madras, Report on the Press, second half of June 1942.
26. Government of Madras Fortnightly Report, Strictly Confidential, 20 March 1942.

unpreceded magnitude. The sympathy that the Congress Party extended to the British, the support that the country gave to war effort and the sacrifices that the people made because of the dislocations caused by war appeared to go unrewarded. Finding it impossible to postpone the agitation any longer, the Congress Working Committee met at Allahabad in May 1942 and passed what was called Quit India Resolution. It suggested : "British rule in India must end immediately"- and the establishment of a provisional government for convening a constituent assembly. But the British refused to be perturbed, for the war situation greatly improved. The navy of the Allied Powers defeated the Japanese fleet in the Battle of Coral Sea. British forces landed in Madagascar. The Russian army marched rapidly towards Germany and Japan got entangled in an intensified offensive against China. As a result the Japanese threat to India receded.[27] In fact the Congress leadership missed the opportunities presented by war and allowed the enemy to become formidable. No wonder Great Britain rejected the demand. As soon as the All India Congress Committee passed the Quit India Resolution, it proceeded with the arrest of Gandhi and all prominent leaders of the party. It banned the Congress, confiscated the party funds and seized the party offices. This gave the signal to the outbreak of disturbances on a large scale in the differen provinces.[28]

In the Tamil districts the agitation was not only intense but widespread. The common people, the workers and students plunged into the movement. In Madras they led processions, raised Quit India slogans, observed hartals, picketed toddy shops and burnt public offices. The workers of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, the Madras Port Trust, the Madras Corporation and the Electric Tramway struck work. The toddy shops in Choolai were set on fire. The public offices were

27. *Ibid*, 20 May 1942 and 9 June 1942.
28. R. C. Majumdar (ed.). *Struggle for Freedom*, pp. 647-649, G. O. 2541, Public, 9 August 1942.

attacked. In North Arcot the demonstrations and disturbances were extensive. The agitators cut off the telegraph and telephone lines, burnt the public buildings at Vellore and Panappakkam and derailed a goods train near Adichanur. In Chengalpattu and South Arcot there were similar out breaks in which the students of Christian College, Loyola College and Annamalai University took a leading part. In Coimbatore there were hartals, picketing and strikes. The sheds in the aerodrome at Sulur were destroyed and trains were derailed. The village offices and toddy shops were set on fire. However, it was in the southern districts that the disturbances were the most serious. Besides the dissruption of communication, the agitators raised barricades and attacked public offices as well as government servants. In the course of the outbreaks municipal offices, school buildings, railway stations and forest offices were set on fire. At Madurai the Congress volunteers clashed with the military and in a firing on 10 August 1942 P. M. Doraiswamy Nadar was killed.[29] There followed serious disturbances and many nationalists were killed in police firings at Rajapalayam, Karaikudi, Devakottai, Tiruvadanai and Poolankurichi.[30]

In a bid to suppress the movement the administration lauched the worst form of repression. The British banned meetings, stopped processions and imposed collective fines. The troops and the police arrested and imprisoned the peop e, and resorted to shooting down people. Besides, the Government superseded several of the local boards including those of Tirunelveli, Ramanathapuram and Virudhunagar for passing resolutions in support of the Quit India Movement. Villages were looted, houses were burnt and men as well as women were tortured to death.[31]

29. MSS. Series, Public, General, G. O. 1037 and 1037 A, 1 April 1947.
30. District Calendar of the Events of Civil Disobedience Movement, Secret, 1942-1943 pp. 78-81.
31. *Ibid.*, August-December, 1942, pp. 34-39.

The attitude of certain political organisations presented serious impediments to the movement. The Muslim League demanded the creation of Pakistan. Taking advantage of the situation created thereby, the British administrators insisted upon the solution of the communal and minority problems as a preliminary to the consideration of the demands, made by the Congress Party. In 1942 Rajagopalachari advocated the acceptance of Pakistan in principle as a basis of settlement between the Congress and the League. The All India Congress Committee rejected his resolution, yet Rajaji's gesture had a demoralising effect upon the nationalist movement. This led to his resignation from the party.[32] The Justice Party extended to the British "unconditional support of Tamilians in the prosecution of the war as a counterblast of the Congress attitude". E V Ramaswami Naicker advocated the creation of a separate Dravida Nadu and threatened to launch an agitation for the eradication of social discriminations and communal disabilities.[33] The Communist Party, led by Mohan Kumaramangalam, Ramamurti and Anandan Nambiar, extended their support to the British as communist Russia joined the side of Great Britain. Detrimental to the nationalist cause, they organised the workers and peasants in support of the English and attacked land holders and factory owners. In 1942 at a meeting of the railway workers at Madras Mohan Kumaramangalam asserted: It was now the duty of the Indians to co-operate actively in the war; that if Japan conquered India, it was not British imperialism but the Indians would suffer most.[34]

Because of these overwhelming odds and for want of co-ordination, the Quit India Movement fell through. Subhas Chandra Bose, who organised the Indian National Army, fought against the British in Assam but was defeated. In consequence the nationalist circles put on the appearance of gloom. How-

32. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, Strictly Confidential, 21 July 1942.
33. *Ibid.*, 19 October to 9th September 1944.
34. G. O, 2152, Public, 23 July and Baliga, *Studies in Madras Administration* Vol, I pp. 35-36.

ever, the success of the Labour Party which was pledged to India's independence, in the election of 1945 in Great Britian led to a welcome change in British attitude to India. At the instance of Prime Minister Attlee, Viceroy Wavell released political prisoners and ordered general elections in the provinces in 1945. The Tamilnad Congress Committee under the leadership of K. Kamaraj by this time had emerged as a powerful organisation. It created the National Youth Federation and gained the support of the peasants and workers. As a result it won an easy victory. On 30th April 1946 Congress Party formed a ministry under the leadership of T. Prakasam. The period was full of troubles, for the country suffered considerably due to shortage of food, inflation and unemployment. The Communists, the Dravida Kazhagam and the Rastria Seva Sangh created disturbances. The workers and peasants too resorted to agitations. Added to these the Prakasam ministry faced the opposition from inside the party. In consequence the ministry collapsed and O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar formed his government on 23rd March 1947.[35]

In March 1946 a Cabinet Mission visited India, studied the political situation and discussed the question of independence with the leaders of the Congress and the League. It suggested the formation of a federation in which the provinces would have full autonomy. In July election was held to the Constituent Assembly. The impressive victory won by Congress so much alarmed the League that the latter resolved to withdraw its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's Plan and decided to launch direct action to achieve Pakistan. On the 16th of August 1946 there began the great killing in Calcutta and it soon spread to Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Bombay and the Punjab. The Muslims fell upon the Hindus, slaughtered them whether they were men, women or infants, looted the towns and drove out the populations. The Hindus retaliated but not so effectively. In consequence the Hindus, the Sikhs and the

35. G. Rudrayya Choudhari, *Prakasam: A Political Study*, Bombay, 1971. pp. 165-170.

Christians were driven out from vast areas and the country was overtaken by panic.

On 2nd September 1946 an interim government headed by Nehru assumed office. After a great deal of persuation, the League joined this government, yet it refused to participate in the Constituent Assembly. In the mean time a fresh wave of communal riot spread to the different parts of the country and people in large number were cut to pieces. The Gandhian principle of non-violence fell into shambles and the leaders reconciled themselves to the concept of partition. Now Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy, made an announcement providing for the partition of the country. Gandhi and Nehru agreed to this formula. British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act, which granted independence to the divided country on 15 August 1947. The savage killings, the exodus of populations and the division of the country cast their gloom, yet freedom was greeted with rejoicings in the villages and towns of Tamil Nadu as else where in the country. The party men held flag hoisting ceremonies in the morning and meetings in the evening. The workers and students led processions in which the effigies of British imperialism were burnt.[36] The Madras legislature adopted a resolution welcoming the transfer of power.[37] This marked the dawn of a new era.

36. Madras in 1947, Madras, 1948 pp. 1-2.
37. Madras State Administrative Report, 1952-53, part II pp. 102-105.

Chapter XXXII

CONGRESS ADMINISTRATION

The Indian National Congress dominated the political scene of Tamil Nadu from 1937 to 1967. Imperialism moved into retreat and nationalism gained ascendancy. This period of struggle of freedom produced two outstanding leaders-one representing the Aryan elite and the other the Dravidian peasantry-they were Rajaji and Kamaraj, who were destined to give leadership to the state as well as the nation in troubled times. They started their political career in the Congress Party, while one left it, the other remained to the last. Both were ardent patriots, yet political rivals. In their bid to uplift the masses from poverty Rajaji favoured private enterprize, while Kamaraj democratic socialism. At the zenith of their political career they occupied exalted positions both in the state as well as in the nation. In between the forces represented by these two leaders stood E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, leading a crusade against social evils. As a result the historical developments centred on the work of these eminent leaders of Tamil Nadu.

Administration of Rajaji

C. Rajagopalachari began his career as a lawyer at Salem. Popularly called Rajaji, he emerged as a prominent leader in the struggle for freedom. In his views and methods, as on the issue of Pakistan, he did not always agree with Gandhi. Yet a common faith in Hindu culture, social reform and non-violence made them close associates.[1] When the Congress decided on non co-operation, Rajaji led the movement in South India. In 1922 at the invitation of Gandhi, he took up the editorship of *Young India*, a political weekly published from Ahmedabad. In the controversy over council entry he led the no-changers against the pro-changers. A believer in

1. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 1921, p. 13.

constructive programme, he founded the Tiruchengode Ashram to train the volunteers in constructive work—medical care, prohibition, eradication of untouchability and manufacture of khadi products.[2] In 1930 when Gandhi led the salt satyagraha at Dandi, he did a similar work at Vedaranyam. Through service to the cause of nationalism Rajaji emerged prominent in politics of the country.

In the election of 1937 the Congress Party defeated the Justice Party and captured a majority of seats in the Madras Legislature. Elected as leader of Congress legislature party, Rajaji formed his ministry. As the British retained with them overriding powers, he had to function under severe restrictions.[3] Yet because of his latent suspicions against his colleagues as well as cpponents, he steered clear of any confrontation with Francis Erskine, the Governor of Madras, in the administration of the province.

Being the first popular ministry, its formation excited hope and enthusiasm in the country, but before long it entangled itself into difficulties. The Congress Party was committed to the introduction of the prohibition of drinking of liquor. Though toddy and certain other liquors were considered essential for sustaining the health of the working people, the habit of excessive drinking not only ruined families but also led to clashes. Therefore in 1938 he introduced on an experimental measure prohibition in his home district of Salem followed by Chittoor and Cuddappah. In practice this proved a failure, for distillation of illicit liquor went under ground, providing an unfailing income to the excise officials and employment to the unemployed. As a compensation for the loss of excise duties, he introduced the abnoxious sales tax in his budget for the year 1939-40. The business community

2. D. J. Arnold, *Nationalism and Regional Politics in Tamilnad, India, 1920-1937,* pp. 366-7.
3. A. Ramaswami, (ed.) *Salem District Gazetteer,* Madras, 1969, pp. 89-90.

opposed this measure, still it was imposed upon the poverty striken people. Though it yielded a large revenue to the state, this drastic measure proved oppressive. It corrupted not only the public servants but also the merchant community at the expense of the consumers. The extensive influence that the commercial tax officials came to wield and the vast financial interests that they came to acquire reflected upon the magnitude of corruption that this measure generated.[4]

During this period there was a clamour for welfare measures. Due to the initiative taken by T. Prakasam, the Revenue Minister, a committee was appointed to study the condition of the ryots living in zamindari estates. Though a report was prepared, no legislation could be enacted, partly because of the reluctance of the leaders including Rajaji and partly because of the resignation of the ministry on the issue of British India joining World War II.[5] A measure for the relief of rural indebtedness was accepted but its benefits went more to the land lords than to the poor peasants. As an orthodox Hindu, he was very much concerned at the spread of Buddhism, Islam and Christianity among the depressed communities. Therefore, following the example of the Temple Entry Proclamations issued by R. Shanmugham Chetty in Cochin and C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar in Travancore, he took measures aimed at opening temples to the 'untouchables'.

Agitation Against Hindi

At its session at Kanpur in 1925 the Congress decided to conduct its proceedings in Hindustani but to permit the non-Hindustani knowing people to use English. A feeling gained ground that it was against national dignity to conduct its proceedings in the language of alien rulers. In pursuance of this decision Rajaji in 1930 introduced Hindustani as a com-

4. N. V. Subramanian, *Rajaji as Chief Minister*, Rajaji Commemoration Volume, pp. 31-37.
5. P. D. Kaushik, *The Congress Ideology and Programme*, Bombay, 1964, p. 285.

pulsory subject of study in the schools. But this reform excited the suspicions of the people. The Tamils developed a fear that it would lead to the Aryan domination of the South and neglect of their own language. Dravida Kazhagam condemned this move, as calculated to impose Aryan influence upon Dravidian culture. A revival of Aryan culture, it was feared, would perpetuate Brahmin domination and social iniquities.

As opposition failed to yield result, E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, organised an anti-Hindi conference at Salem. The Dravida Kahzhagam formed a boycott committee, established a volunteer camp and formulated a programme of agitation.[6] The Justice Party, the Scheduled Castes Federation and the Muslim League extended their support. There followed protest meetings, black flag demonstrations, picketing and hunger strike. Volunteers picketed the ministerial residence of Rajaji and the Hindu Theological School at Madras. Stalin Jagadisan undertook a hunger strike for nearly two months in protest against the measure[7] while Talamuthu and Natarajan died of police torture.[8] A rally moved from Tiruchirapalli to Madras for demonstrations.[9] In the course of the agitation more than 1200 demonstrators including Naicker were arrested and jailed. Yet the movement continued till the exit of the ministry on 29 October 1939 over the issue of war. By a proclamation, Governor James Hope, assumed the direct administration of the province. His government abolished the teaching of Hindi as a compulsory subject and released the demonstrators from prisons.[10]

6. Government of Madras, Public, Confidential, Fortnightly Report, 24 June 1938.
7. *Ibid.*, 6 July 1938.
8. T. M. Parthasarathy, *Thi Mu Ka Varalaru*. Madras, 1955, p. 26.
9. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, Public, Confidential, 2 December 1938.
10. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, Public General (Strictly Confidential). 24 June to 2 December 1938.

Rise and Fall of Ministries

After his exit from power, Rajaji drifted into political wilderness. Immediately after his resignation of office, he began to plead with the Congress Party for the acceptance of power. However, he alienated the sympathy of large sections of people. Due to the attempt that he made to impose Hindi, the Tamils turned against him. In view of his opposition to the formation of Andhra Desa as a separate province, the Telugus looked upon him with disfavour. Because of the Quit India Move-

C. Rajagopalachari

ment the British launched repression against the nationalists. In the midst of this ordeal he extended his support to the Muslim League's demand for partition and secured a resolution passed to that effect by the provincial Congress. This resolution threw the nationalists into disarray. E. V. Ramaswami Naicker too was sore that Rajaji favoured the creation of Pakistan and not of Dravidastan.[11] For fear of expulsion from the Congress, Rajaji resigned from the party. In 1942 the Tamilnad Congress Committee cancelled its resolution that was passed in support of Muslim League's demand.[12]

Finding his political exile unrewarding, Rajaji made overtures for re-entry into the party. The opposition to this move by Kamaraj's followers revived a Brahmin *vs.* Dravidian controversy.[13] Yet because of his soft corner for Rajaji, Gandhi suggested the restoration of his position in the party.[14] Accordingly, Abul Kalam Azad, President of the Congress, admitted him to the party without the knowledge of provincial leadership. In the election of 1945, when the Congress Party captured a majority of seats in provincial legislature,[15] Rajaji contested for leadership. Gandhi extended his support covertly by inviting the rival contestants, Prakasam Pantulu and Pattabhi Sitaramayya to undertake 'constructive work'. But the Congress could not be misled, for it elected Prakasam to leadership. On 30 April 1946 Prakasam formed his ministry at Madras.[16] Yet the Congress leadership stood firmly by the side of Rajaji. In 1947 on the retirement of Mountbatten from office it elevated him to the governor generalship of India. He held this position until the republican constitution

11. *Ibid.*, 19 June 1942.
12. *Ibid.*, 7 August 1942.
13. *Ibid.*, 25 October 1945 and C. Y. Coupland, *Indian Politics*, 1936-42, Oxford, 1944, p. 290.
14. *The Hindu*, Madras, 24 September 1945.
15. Since 1936, elections were postponed because of war. The next election was held only in 1945.
16. Rudrayya Chowdhari, *Prakasam, A Political Study*, pp. 163-165.

came into force in 1950. As Home Minister in the Nehru Cabinet, he piloted in Parliament the Preventive Detention Act of 1951, which greatly curtailed the freedom of the citizens.[17]

Upon the fall of the Prakasam Ministry in 1947, O.P. Ramaswami Reddiar assumed power. It was during his administration that the country attained independence. In 1949, P. S. Kumaraswamy Raja formed his ministry. In the rise and fall of ministries, what was conspicuous was the role of Kamaraj, the President of the Provincial Congress. The administration of Reddiar and Raja witnessed Communist insurgence, for there came shortages, strikes, sabotages, arsons and murders.[18] An attempt made by the ministry to ban the Communist Party failed, for the High Court held it unconstitutional.[19] T. Prakasam left the Congress to form the Praja Party. In the election of 1952 Kumaraswamy Raja suffered defeat and his Congress Party could gain only 152 out of 375 seats in the Assembly.

Second Administration of Rajaji

As the Congress failed to capture a majority of seats in the state legislature, Kamaraj and Kumaraswamy Raja invited Rajaji to state politcs. Accordingly they elevated him to the leadership of Congress legislature party. Supported by a few independents, Rajaji formed his ministry, now for the second time.

With the assumption of power Rajaji made a promising start. The people had been reduced to suffering for more than a decade because of the rationing of essential commodities, introduced during World War II. Long queues before shops led to stampedes and other ordeals. At the same time black marketing flourished because of official collusion and corruption. The Nehru administration at New Delhi appeared to have no courage to decontrol the market. But Rajaji built up buffer

1 ment of Madras, Fortnightly Report, Confidential, 11 March 1951.

18. *Ibid.*, 30 April 1947 and 7 September 1949.

19. *Ibid.*, 13 October 1949 and 14 March 1951.

tocks and decontrolled the market, giving a lead to the nations. Prices came down and people gained a real relief. As the Communists took advantage of scarcity of essential materials to let loose terrorism for the achievement of their raj, Rajaji declared them as his enemy number I and effectively curbed their activity.

Rajaji was cautious not to repeat his mistake on language policy but he invited troubles when he decided to reorganise the educational system in 1953. By his new scheme of elementary education, the children were to attend the classes for one session either in the morning or in the evening and for the rest of the day they were to learn their traditional work from their parents. The declared objectives were to admit more of students to the schools and to find a solution to the unemployment problems, but schools in municipal towns were exempted for one year.

However, the situation appeared unfavourable for the new experiment. E. V. Ramaswami Naicker during this period made Ganapathi and Rajaji the principal targets of his attack. He condemned god Ganapati as the symbol of *varnashrama dharma* and source of Dravidian degradation. In May 1953 he and his Kazhagamites broke a large number of newly made idols of Ganapathi Entertaining constant suspicion on Rajaji, he found a latent intrigue to revive the caste system. The opponents to the scheme in the Congress Party feared that it was calculated to water down the content of education, to persuade different communities to pursue traditional occupations, to strengthen caste distinctions and to perpetuate Brahmin supremacy. Already there were complaints that Rajaji extended special favours to the people of his community.[20] In the provincial Congress he encountered the opposition of Kamaraj As the tide turned against him, he resigned power in April 1954.[21] In later years he sided with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in the anti-Hindi agitation and founded the Swatandra

20. *Viduthalai*, Madras, 6 to 27 May 1953.
21. Ko. Thangavelu, *Thamizh Nila Varalaru*, Madras, 1976, pp. 452-475.

Party. The feudal and Brahmin sections rallied to this new organisation. Incidentally this development completed the transformation of the Congress in Tamil Nadu from a Brahmin to a Dravidian organisation.

A man of simple living and clear thinking, Rajaji believed in the freedom of the individual, restriction of public authority and virtues of Indian culture. Because of his independence and pragmatism, he frequently maintained his positions in disregard to what the rest of the leadership felt. As a national leader he thought ahead and as an administrator he dealt with delicate issues with sagacity. These make him a fascinating character. Yet it cannot be denied that he frequently allowed his views to come into conflict with each other, depending upon his position, out of power or in power. As an opponent of the Swarajists he favoured non-co-operation but after his resignation from office in 1939 he made overtures for co-operation with the British. He supported the demand for Pakistan and not for Andhradesa. As Chief Minister he introduced Hindi as a compulsory subject of study but as a Swatantra leader he opposed the imposition of that language upon non-Hindi speaking people. When he was in central cabinet he curbed political rights through his Preventive Detention Act but in the Swatantra Party he advocated individual freedom. Though he believed in social reform, he adopted a different attitude when the *gurukula* affair and caste based education came in for attack. He started his career as a nationalist in the Congress Party but ended his career as a regionalist in alliance with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. Perhaps Rajaji was no exception to a common phenomenon, for S. Satyamurti used to remark: "Hypocracy! Thy name is Indian Democracy".[22]

Administration of Kamaraj

On 13 April 1954 upon the resignation of Rajaji, Kamaraj formed his ministry. Son of Kumaraswami Nadar, he was born

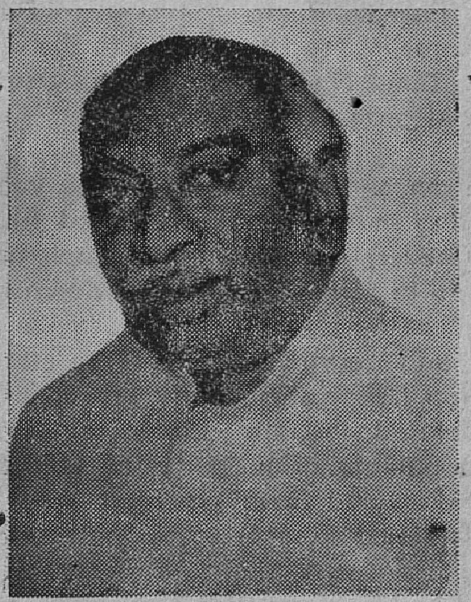
22. R. Parthasarathy, *S. Satyamurti*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 155.

in 1903 in a poor family at Virudhunagar. Early in his life he lost his father. After gaining a little education and working in shops at Virudhunagar and Trivandrum he joined politics as a volunteer in the Congress Party. As a volunteer he participated in the Vaikom Satyagraha and Salt Satyagraha. Endowed with keen intellect, organising ability and enormous common sense, he gained influence and emerged as a leader of the Youth Congress.[23] His keen interest in nationalist activity and social reform led him to jail six times for a total period of 3000 days. At Vellore Jail he came into contact with leaders from other parts of India. Associating himself with Satyamurti, Kamaraj supported him in his conflict with Rajaji. In 1937 he was elected to the legislature from Virudhunagar. Three years later, he defeated Rajaji's candidate, Subbiah, and became the President of the Tamilnad Congress Committee. Subsequently, he served as a member of the Constituent Assembly, which framed the constitution of India. The decisive role that he played in the elevation of Prakasam Pantulu Ramaswami Reddiar, Kumaraswamy Raja and Rajagopalachari to power, earned for him the title 'King Maker'.[24]

In 1953 he succeeded Rajaji as Chief Minister at Madras. Supported by the Dravida Kazhagam, the Congress won 151 out of 205 seats in the Assembly at the election of 1957. Kamaraj continued in power until 1963, when he resigned office at his will. As Chief Minister he aimed at creating a stable, efficient and liberal administration. It was his objective to promote agriculture, maintain peace in industry and tackle the problems of ignorance and poverty. In the interest of an efficient administration he formed a small ministry, gave considerable freedom to the ministers, guarded the services against political interference and maintained contact with the common people.[25]

23. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, Strictly Confidential, 25 October 1945.
24. *The Hindu*, Madras, 3 October 1975.
25. K. S. Ramanujam, *The Big Change*, Madras 1967 p. 111.

From his own experience he felt that promotion of education was essential for the economic welfare of the people. With this end in view he opened schools even in remote villages strengthened the existing institutions and implemented a scheme of compulsory education for the children upto the age of eleven.[26] Fee concession, free uniform and mid-day meals were given on a large scale to draw the poor children to schools. Donations from the rich were collected for the improvement of the educational system. The Madurai University that was established during the administration of Bhaktavatsalam with T. P. Minakshisundaran as Vice Chancellor, owed its origin to his vision. Secondly, he aimed at a more equitable distribution of land and protection of the interests of the cultivators. During this period rich land lords held vast lands but ignored proper utilisation and evicted tenants at will. Therefore the Madras Land Reforms Act fixed a ceiling limit of thirty



K. Kamaraj

26. Government of Madras, *Chennai Rajvathil Harijana Munnetram*, pp. 1-9.

standard acres for a family of five or less and five more standard acres for each additional member, subject to a maximum of sixty standard acres. The Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection Act of 1955 protected the tenants against eviction. Yet, these measures proved ineffective, for they contributed to corruption and promoted binami deals. The tenants were denied of social mobility, for if they left their holdings, they found it impossible to get sites from other land owners. He started pilot projects for promoting cultivation and carried out electrification on a large scale for the benefit of the villages and farming. Under his administration the state ranked first in India in the utilization of power for irrigation purposes. Because of the initiatives taken by his minister, Venkataraman, industrialisation made rapid stride. Nationalisation was avoided to the extent possible, private enterprize was encouraged and industrial peace was maintained. The Boiler Plant at Tiruchirapalli, the Heavy Vehicle Unit at Avadi, the Neyveli Lignite Project, the Atomic Energy Plant, the Bhavani Project[27] and the Kundah Project came into existence due to the effort of Kamaraj. In consequence Tamil Nadu captured the third place among states in industrial progress.[28]

Having entrenched in power for nine years Kamaraj felt that he was getting more and more isolated from the common people. Though several projects were implemented, no break through was made in the economic development of the state. He failed to protect the interests of the Tamils over the issues of river waters and reorganisation of the state on linguistic basis. The foreign policy of his party proved a failure, for India found herself isolated in international circles. Concerned at the growing unpopularity of his party, he held discussions with Prime Minister Nehru and there emerged what was called the Kamaraj Plan. It aimed at securing for party work the services of Congressmen in power. Ministers and ministries fell almost everywhere yet a few survived, for Nehru accepted the resigna-

27. Government of Madras, *Irrigation in Madras State*, Madras, 1955
28. R. P. Kapur. *Kamaraj The Iron Man*. New Delhi, 1966, pp. 75-140.

tions of those whom he decided to dispense with. Nevertheless Nehru and Kamaraj stood at the helm, for the former continued as Prime Minister, while the latter emerged as Congress President.[29]

Second Anti-Hindi Agitation

At Madras, Bhaktavatsalam succeeded Kamaraj on 3rd October 1962. His administration witnessed the decline of the Congress Party in the state and the rise of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. To this development the Anti-Hindi Agitation contributed in a great deal.

Since independence the people of Tamil Nadu entertained a series of grievances against Delhi. The Central Government collected more taxes from the people than what the State Government did. Yet the state received a raw deal in the allotment of development projects. The community projects and the block development programmes promised a solution to the economic malady but they created more masters than servants. The Five Year Plans, which were launched with fan fare, ended in disappointment. As a result unemployment, poverty and illiteracy continued unabated. In the mean time the people found the central bodies like the Indian Railways, the University Grants Commission and the Food Corporation of India so much dominated by the North that they found it impossible to secure for the South an equitable share either in their financial allotments or employment potential. This sad

29. V. K. Narasimhan, *Kamaraj A Study*. pp. 85-93.
This was a crucial period in the history of the country. Nehru passed away under the shock of Chinese invasion and India saw the possibility of political instability But Kamaraj went through the process of consenses, elected Lal Bahadur Sastri to leadership and thereby provided for smooth transition. When Sastri passed away, he supported Indira Gandhi against Morarji Desai, to become Prime Minister, However, in later years he realised that he committed a blunder, for the declaration of Emergency indicated that she had not much regard for democracy. This so much preyed upon his mind that he passed away on 2 October, 1975.

anomaly gave credence to the popular slogan: "North is prospering but South is withering". The language policy too worked against equality of opportunity, guaranteed in the Constitution. While Hindi was made the official language of the country, Tamil was denied of an equal status. A three language formula was experimented with, but it placed an unequal burden upon the South, for while a southerner was required to learn three languages, the northerner refused to learn any except Hindi. As the name boards and announcements on the railways and high ways were given in Hindi, it appeared that every opportunity was given to the northerner to move freely through out the country, while it was denied to southerner.[30] As a result the Tamils entertained a legitimate fear that they would be denied of opportunities and reduced to a degraded status among the citizens.

The deep seated agony that had been building up in the South burst into flame before long. In response to a call by the D. M. K. the state observed a protest day on 13 October, 1957 against the imposition of Hindi. Rajaji and other leaders made an appeal to Prime Minister Nehru to bring about a reconsideration of the entire issue of official language "so that the spirit of true freedom is maintained". On 22 December 1958 a language convention at Madras passed a resolution demanding the continuance of English as official language of the Union. The State Assembly also passed a resolution to that effect. Despite these appeals, the Centre refused to budge and the appointed day, 26 January 1965, when Hindi was to become the sole official language, drew near.[31] The D.M K. observed 26 January, 1965, as a day of mourning. Students

30. It is possible for the Central Government at a very meagre expense to use all national languages on name boards of important railway stations and important roads and to associate popular words from all national languages with Central offices and projects. This would have won for the Centre the confidence of all linguistic groups. Yet reason has not yet dawned upon the administration.

31. K. S. Ramanujam, *The Big Change*, Madras, 1967, pp. 42-48.

held anti-Hindi rallies, burned the effigy of Hindi at several places and two persons, Aranganathan and Chinnaswamy, committed self immolation.[32] The students of Madras took out a procession to convey their sympathy for the dead but were lathi charged and fired upon. One student was killed at Madras and another at Annamalainagar.[33] Bhaktavatsalam, who had neither of the tact of Rajaji nor the sagacity of Kamaraj, dealt with the situation wrongly. He called out the army and banned meetings, but the disturbances spread. Large crowds made demonstrations, picketed post offices, erased Hindi name boards, set fire to buses and raided railway stations. Fifty buses were burned, numerous railway coaches were destroyed, fifty post offices were attacked and twenty railway stations were raided. Army and police opened fire at several places. The official reports put the number of dead at seventy, while unofficial reports,[34] five hundred.[35] Thousands were arrested and jailed. Despite this repression, it appeared that the movement would spread to Telugu Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Bengal.[36] Thereupon Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Sastri assured the people that he would make statutory provision for the continuance of English as long as any state wished for and not to make Hindi the sole official language unless all states agreed to. This led to the withdrawal of the agitation in March 1965. However, the Pakistani War, death of Sastri and the election of 1967 presented opportunities to the Centre to evade this statutory commitment.[37]

32. *Indian Express*, Madras, 18 January 1965, *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 28 January 1965.
33. P. S. Elango, *Thiyagarayar Muthal Doctor Kalaignar Varai*, Madras, 1965, p. 357
    A. Ramaswamy, *Rathathil Aimpathu Natkal*, Madurai 1973, pp. 22-23.
34. *Indian Express*, Madras, 1 to 12 February 1965.
35. A. Ramaswamy, *op cit* p. 158.
36. T. M. Parthasarathy, *Thi Mu Ka Varalaru*, p. 522.
37. K. S. Ramanujam, *op. cit.* p. 48.
    During the agitation Union Misisters, C. Subramamian and O. Alagesan, tendered resignations but withdrew on promise of safeguards. Parliament enacted a legislation providing for continued use of English but the Union admjnistration did not follow it strictly.

Chapter XXXIII

TAMIL INTEGRATION MOVEMENT

The traditional Tamilaham, which extended from the Arabian Sea to Bay of Bengal and from Kanyakumari to the Seven Hills, as indicated earlier, lost its western and northern areas as the result of historical developments. The rest of Tamil Nadu together with most of Telugu Nadu and parts of Kerala and Karnataka formed Madras Presidency. Leading mostly a tribal life in a barren territory, the Tamils found themselves dominated and exploited by non-Tamils. Whether in the Justice Party or in the Congress Party they could find no fellow Tamil, with the solitary exception of Kamaraj, occupying the leadership of the ministries. In employment opportunities they were hopelessly outwitted. At the same time the Tamils, who lived in large number in Travancore, suffered persecution at the hands of the ruling community of Nairs. These gave rise to an agitation for the formation of a state exclusively for the Tamils.

The Indian National Congress promoted the demand for the reorganisation of states, when it formed provincial committees separately for the Tamils, Telugus, Kannadins and Malayalees. However, after the attainment of Independence several of the leaders developed doubts in the wisdom of the move, for they feared that it would work against national integration. Confronted with this situation, the Telugus of Madras Presidency and the Tamils of Travancore State embarked upon a struggle for the realisation of their cherished goals. As a result the question of reorganisation of states assumed a definite importance during the Congress administration.

The Telugus occupied a compact territory, but were divided between Madras Presidency and Hyderabad state. As a result they entertained a grievance that their interests received no due consideration from the administration. Recalling

the glory of the past, they demanded the formation of *Vishal Andhra*. But they encountered opposition from several leaders, including Rajaji. Failing to realise their ambition, the Telugus launched an agitation. In support of this popular demand Potti Sriramulu began a fast and died. As the disturbances spread, Prime Minister Nehru conceded to the demand. Accordingly he appointed Justice K. N. Wanchoo to examine the financial and other implications. On the basis of his report the Government of India decided in favour of the formation of Andhra State. On 1 October 1953 the new state came into existence with Karnool as capital and T. Prakasam as Chief Minister.[1]

A claim was made to Madras City but as this had no substance, it was rejected. However, the Tamils lost a part of their traditional home land, the districts of Nellore and Chittoor together with the renowned shrines at Tirupati and Tirutani. The separation of Andhra region created serious problems for the residuary state of Tamil Nadu. As certain Tamil speaking areas including Tirutani too were given to Andhra State, the people launched an agitation under the leadership of Sivagnana Gramini for the restoration of these territories to Tamil Nadu. Many of the Telugu public servants decided to continue in Madras service. This rendered the employment opportunities of the Tamils bleak. The Madras City depended upon Nellore District for the supply of food grains but as it was given to Andhra Desa, it was required to turn to other sources.[2] Nevertheless the two peoples liberated each other.

1. In 1948 the Government of India appointed the Dar Commission to report on the question of formation of the states of Andhra, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra. The Commission reported against the proposal 'at present'. However a committee consisting of Nehru, Patel and Sitaramayya, appointed by Congress, favoured the formation of Andhra State, (H.V. Pataskar. *Report on Boundary Dispute*, p. 10).
2. Madras State Administration Report, 1952-53, pp. 1-8.

Agitation in Travancore

In the princely states of Travancore and Cochin there languished a large Tamil population. Mostly concentrated in South Travancore, Devikulam, Peermedu and Chittur, they constituted a linguistic minority in a Malayalee dominated area. Their ordeals defied description, for the Nairs who controlled the administration, denied to the Tamils any place in the establishments of the state. As most of the lands belonged to the Nair land lords, the Tamils lived at their mercy as tenants and labourers. They had no right either to enter the temples or to learn their language in the schools or to serve on the administration. Added to these, the princely administration promoted Malayali migration to the Tamil areas, particularly Devikulam and Peermedu. Threatened with extinction, the Tamils clamoured for the integration of their territory with Tamil Nadu.[3]

At a conference at Trivandrum in May 1938 the leaders discussed the issues, created by the imposition of Malayalam upon the Tamils, exclusion from public services and collection of oppressive taxes.[4] In October 1938 at a meeting that was held at Rajakkamangalam, they adopted a resolution, demanding the formation of a separate district for their areas.[5] This was followed by the organisation of Tamil Sangam.[6] In December 1945 at a meeting at Nagercoil the leaders formed the All Travancore Tamilian Congress, subsequently called Travancore Tamilnad Congress. S. Nathaniel was elected President, but A. Nesamony wielded the real influence. The party decided to work for the merger of Tamil speaking areas of the princely states with Tamil Nadu.[7]

3. Sri Moolam Assembly Proceedings, 3 August 1938, Vol. 12, pp. 1066-1071.
4. *The Hindu*, Madras, 17 May, 1938.
5. *Ibid.*, 17 October 1938.
6. *Ibid.*, 28 September 1938.
7. *Kanyakumari*, Weekly, Nagercoil, 26 September 1956.

In 1947 when elections were ordered to state legislature there came keen rivalry between the Tamil Nad Congress and the State Congress. The police, at the instance of the Nairs, broke up the Tamil meetings and beat up the people. At Mankad and Keezhkulam the troops opened fire, killing three Tamils and injuring many.[8] Despite the combined opposition of the Malayalees and the administration, the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress captured fourteen out of eighteen seats, which it contested.[9]

The situation worsened after the elections. Pattom A. Thanu Pillai who entertained an inveterate hatred against the Tamils, formed his ministry.[10] Supported by the state police, his fellow Nairs fell upon the Tamils and assaulted them at several places. Two persons were murdered while another was thrown alive into a deep well.[11] Men and women were dragged into police vans, dishonoured and tortured. A reign of terror spread its tentacles.[12] In 1949 a new situation developed as the other Malayalam speaking state of Cochin was united with Travancore. This reduced the Tamils to a smaller minority. In protest against this development demonstrations were held but the leaders were arrested.

In the election of 1952 the State Congress, supported

8. Assistant Superintendent of Police, Nagercoil. Police Report, 11 February, 1948.
9. K. Damodaran and C. Narayana Pillai, *Keralathile Swathanthriya Prasthanam*, p. 174.
10. While Sanku Nadar drowned in well, his wife died of snake bite. On a visit to his hut Nesamony found five starving children, left behind. (K. Kochukrishnan Nadar, *Nadar Charitram*, pp. 213-14.)

    In 1953 when Kamaraj was elected to become Chief Minister of Madras, Pattom A. Thanu Pillai raised apprehensions, for fear of its impact upon Travancore. Private Diary of Thanu Pillai at Nehru Memorial Library brings out his opposition.
11. *Report on the Administration of Travancore and Cochin, 1949-50*, Trivandrum, 1951, p. 5.
12. *The Bharathi*, Trivandrum, 25 Dhanu 1123. M.E.

by Travancore Tamil Nad Congress, formed a ministry with A. J. John as Chief Minister. However, as a separate district Congress Committee for Tamils was not conceded, the Tamils withdrew support and the ministry fell. In the election held in 1954 the Praja Socialist Party formed its ministry with Pattom Thanu Pillai as Chief Minister. The return of Pattom gave the signal to the persecution of the Tamils. In South Travancore he employed his police in support of Nair land lords against the Tamil tenants. He promoted a state aided Malayalee colonisation in Devikulam and Peermedu and evicted the Tamils from Kariavattom, a village near Trivandrum for establishing a university campus. With the influx of Malayalees, the Tamils feared that they would be reduced into a minority in their own areas. Worse still the police forces took the side of the Malayalee controlled High Range Workers' Union in its conflict with the Tamil controlled South Indian Plantation Workers' Union. As a result the Tamils were rounded up and beaten.[13]

As oppression continued, the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress decided to launch an agitation. It demanded the introduction of Tamil as official language in Tamil areas and their integration with Tamil Nadu. T. S. Ramaswami Pillai and A. Kunjan Nadar, appointed as dictators one after the other, led the movement. Volunteers defied ban orders in Devikulam, held demonstrations, burned stamped papers and picketed the public offices.[14] On 11 August 1954 was celebrated as liberation day and a complete hartal was observed. Workers struck work, students boycotted schools and demonstrators picketed offices. Lathi charge on students at Martandam led to rioting. Police opened fire at the mob at Pudukkadai, Martandam and Kuzhithurai. Eight people died on the spot, two in hospitals and many received bullet injuries. This gave the signal to a police raj. Military columns, police parties

13. *The Hindu*, Madras, 10 July and 7 August, 1954.
14. Ponnappa Nadar and Thanulinga Nadar, two popular leaders, were arrested in Devikulam, badly beaten and locked up for days togerher in an uncleaned room, used as a labour room.

and Nair bands swarmed over the country, raided the houses, and rounded up the Tamils, irrespective of age or sex. At several places they established concentration camps from where dead bodies were thrown into the nearby wells and tanks. Kunjan Nadar was taken into custody and badly crippled. Many other leaders shared his fate. As panic and gloom spread, the inhabitants deserted their houses and fled to the Western Ghats and Tirunelveli district. In this dark hour the Tamils appealed to Rajaji and Kamaraj for succour, but they decided to leave them to their fate. However, Ram Manohar Lohia and other leaders condemned the policy of Pattom Thanu Pillai for bringing shame to the socialist movement. The ministry collapsed and the new government headed by Govinda Menon withdrew the cases that were foisted on the Tamils.[15]

Loss of Tamil Areas and River Waters

In 1953 the Government of India appointed the States Reorganisation Commission consisting of Fazl Ali as Chairman and H. N. Kunzru and K. M. Panikkar as Members to consider and report on the question of reorganisation of states. The presence of K. M. Panikkar, a Nair with strong Malayalee bias, on the Commission portended evil for the interests of Tamil Nadu but no notice was taken. The Commission recommended the transfer of the entire Malayalam speaking areas from Madras State but only a part of the Tamil speaking areas from Travancore-Cochin. It allotted the entire Malabar area consisting of the present day districts of Cannanore, Calicut and Palghat from Madras to Kerala. At the same time it gave from Kerala to Tamil Nadu only the southern half of Trivandrum district. Neyyattinkara, Devikulam and Peermedu, the predominantly Tamil taluqs, were to remain with Kerala.

The Dar Commission adopted the formulae that an area was unilingual, when at least seventy per cent of its people spoke a particular language. Accordingly Devikulam-Peermedu

15. K. Kochukrishnan Nadar, *Nadar Charithiram*, pp. 210-224.

was overwhelmingly Tamil, for seventy eight per cent of the population spoke the same language. By geography it lay contiguous to Madurai district. During the South Indian Rebellion of 1800-1801 the High Ranges served as an area of activity of Tamil rebels. Added to these, Devikulam and Peermedu with their rolling hills, heavy rain fall, green forests and numerous rivers were of vital necessity for Tamil Nadu. For, the two major river systems Periyar and Pampa, which flowed from the High Ranges, offered the only source of irrigation to the parched districts of Coimbatore, Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli.

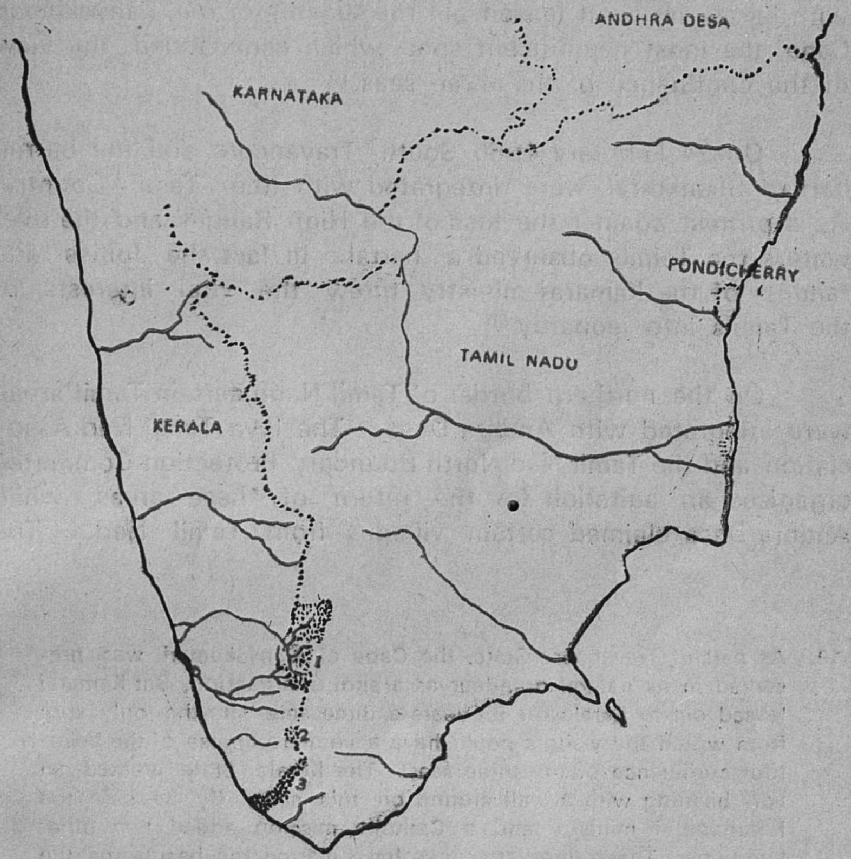
Yet Tamil Nadu lost this vital area through a combination of distortion of facts by the Commission, failure on the side of Kamaraj ministry and want of awareness in Tamil Nadu. In this particular case the Commission argued: "the mere fact that a certain language group has a substantial majority in a certain area should not be the sole deciding factor."[16] To add to the insult it declared that the Tamil population in the area was migrant and floating and that the territory was needed for Kerala for the settlement of people of that state, for impounding the head waters of rivers and for affording protection to the rice fields in the valley bottoms. Strangely the Commission asserted that waters of these major rivers were needed not for the dry lands of Tamil Nadu but for the flooded fields of Kerala.[17] Yet Kamaraj, a man from the water thirsty Ramanathapuram district failed to the Tamils at this glaring instance of injustice, for he meekly submitted to the transfer of Malabar to Kerala without securing the High Ranges for Tamil Nadu.[18] At the height of this tragedy he even fell

16. *Report of the States Reorganisation Commission*, New Delhi, 1955, p. 298.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 296.

18. A. Kunjan Nadar pleaded with Kamaraj to take a strong stand on the issue of Devikulam and Peermedu but the latter dismissed the idea, remarking that it made no difference whether some territory went to Kerala or Tamil Nadu. In fact he missed a historical opportunity of making the arid lands of Tamil Nadu blossom.

TAMIL NADU
after re-organisation



▨ Lost Areas of Tamil Nadu

an easy victim to the machinations of Govinda Menon, the shrued Chief Minister of Kerala, for he transferred the western half of Shenkottai taluq, that the Commission allotted to Tamil Nadu. A thickly wooded area, this is the source of another major river, the Kallada. By a separate agreement with Kerala he even leased out the summit of the Kanyakumari Cape, the most magnificent spot which commanded the view of the confluence of the three seas.[19]

On 24 February 1956 South Travancore and the barren part of Shenkottai were integrated with the Tamil Country. As a protest against the loss of the High Ranges and the river waters the Tamils observed a hartal. In fact the follies and failures of the Kamaraj ministry threw the vital interests of the Tamils into jeopardy.[20]

On the northern border of Tamil Nadu certain Tamil areas were integrated with Andhra Desa. The Ikya Tamil Nad Association and the Tamil Nad North Boundary Protection Committee organised an agitation for the return of these areas, while Andhra Desa claimed certain villages from Tamil Nadu. The

19. As part of Travancore State, the Cape of Kanyakumari was preserved in its natural grandeur as a spot of attraction. But Kamaraj leased out to Kerala for 99 years a three acre site-the only spot from which the visitors could have a unique glimpse of the beautiful confluence of the three seas. The Kerala State erected an ugly building with a wall around on this spot. By its side the Karunanidhi ministry and a Catholic mission added two other buildings. These three structures have marred the beauty of the sea resort and disfigured the Cape. No more the visitors can gain a commanding view of the three seas.
20. South Travancore was formed into the Kanyakumari district. The people joined the fellow Tamils with high hopes but Kamaraj countered: whether he invited them to Tamil Nadu, by presenting betel and arecanut. He even preferred Lourdhammal to the ministry instead of the popular Nesamony. Yet after Virudhunagar rejected him at the state polls in 1967, Kanyakumari gave him asylum and elected him to Parliament in 1969.

Nehru Government appointed H. V. Pataskar on a commission to settle the issue. On the basis of his report a settlement was effected. A large part of Tirutani taluq was given to Tamil Nadu, while an equally large area from Ponneri and Tiruvallur taluqs was transferred to Andhra Desa.[21] This territorial adjustment conferred no benefit upon the Tamils. Though they won the shrine at Tirutani, they lost the irrigation project on the Araniyar. Nevertheless the residuary state emerged as a compact area. In 1957 in view of popular demand the Kamaraj ministry changed the name of the reorganised state from Madras to Tamil Nadu.[22]

21. H. V. Pataskar, Report on Boundary Dispute, Papers placed to Madras Legislature, 25 July 1957, pp. 15-17.

22. Ko. Thangavel, *Thamizh Nila Varalaru*, Madras, 1976, pp. 562-3. The Kamaraj ministry retained the name Madras State also. The D.M.K. ministry dropped the name Madras and retained Tamil Nadu.

Chapter XXXIV

PEASANT UNREST

In the election of 1967 the Congress suffered defeat and the D. M. K. (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) captured power. C. N. Annadurai, partly because of his differences with E. V. Ramaswami Naicker and partly because of his political ambitions, left the Dravida Kazhagam and founded the D. M. K. in 1949. Born at Kanchipuram, he was short statured, soft spoken, fluent speaker and a brilliant organiser. Through stage, movie and press he made his party popular with the masses.[1] In 1957 the D. M. K. won fifteen seats in the Assembly and in 1962 fifty seats. When the next general election of 1967 came near, the situation appeared favourable. The people were dissatisfied at the failure of the Congress as a national party to safeguard the interests of the state on language issue and equality of opportunity. The killings during the Anti-Hindi Agitation of 1965, shortages and high prices of food grains, forcible procurement of paddy at unremunerative prices, starvation deaths among weavers and gold smiths and wide spread unemployment turned large sections against the Congress.[2] In addition there came a Brahmin-Telugu reaction under Rajaji against the Tamil leadership under Kamaraj. As a result the D M. K. won 138 seats against the Congress 49 and assumed power with C. N. Annadurai as Chief Minister. The ascendancy of a regional party that was associated with film politics was of considerable importance. It reflected upon the desperate situation to which the people of the state were reduced. Also it announced the determination of the Tamils to reject the equation of northern interests with national interests. More important was that it agreed with the pattern of conflict

1. S. Swaminathan. *Karunanidhi*. New Delhi, 1974, pp. 8-10.
2. *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 28 January 1965.
3. Annadurai sought the blessings of Rajaji before he assumed Power. Rajaji said: "Don't be afraid, Go ahead, I am here." (*The Hindu*, 25 February 1967.)

between the trends of integration and disintegration, one emerging from the North and other from the South, for the country had not learned the lesson of history in this direction.

Governor Ujjal Singh, Annadurai and Karunanidhi

D. M. K. and A. D. M. K.

The D. M. K. assumed power amidst scenes of popular enthusiasm, for it promised one measure of rice for a rupee, keeping three measures in view, opposition to the imposition of Hindi, autonomy for the state and socialism. However, it found its task unattainable. Annadurai provided for the sale of rice at one rupee a measure at Madras and Coimbatore at an annual loss of eight and a half crores of rupees for the state but found it impossible to extend the benefit to other areas. Though he adopted for the state a two language formula of Tamil and English,[4] he was forced to abandon the demand for separate Dravida Nadu, as Parliament enacted the Anti-Secession Act. Upon his premature death, M. Karunanidhi was elected to power. As Chief Minister, he did much for the improvement of slums but his two major projects, Veeranam

4. *The Hindu*, Madras, 25 February 1967.

Water Supply Scheme and the Coovum Reclamation ended in fiasco. Nationalisation of bus routes was largely extended but it marked the beginning of an era of real ordeals for the people and recurring losses to the state. One rupee a measure of rice was also discontinued. There were complaints that the administration was lost in small issues-victory marches, opening of statues and memorials, admissions and promotions, allotment of houses, demolition of hospital walls at Vellore, operation of state buses in competition with private, erection of check posts, collection of free degrees and changing place names rather than places.[5] As a result popular enthusiasm gave way to widespread frustration. On 1 February 1976 President Ahmed dismissed the ministry on charges of "maladministration, corruption and misuse of power."[6] The D. M. K. ended up its rule with rice sold at more than six rupees a measure instead of one rupee that it promised. However, the President's rule, that formed part of the Emergency, brought no cheer to the masses. Marked by raids, arrests, press censorship and slogans, it filled the jails with 'anti-social elements'. Fear combined with gloom made a firm grip over the state.[7]

5. In the collection of titles the D. M. K. did not differ much from the Justice Party. Madurai University awarded an honorary D. Litt. to Nedunchezhian, while Annamalai University to Karunanidhi. In the demonstration against the award at Annamalai University, one person, it is believed, being chased by the police, fell into a pool and drowned.
6. *The Hindu*, Madras, 2 February, 1976.
7. K. Kamaraj, who elevated Indira Gandhi to prime ministership stated on the imposition of Emergency: "My mind is filled with sadness. It was not to put a few people in power that so many sacrifices were made, so many miseries suffered... In a democracy the right to speak and to write are essential. Both have vanished now."
(*Indian Express*, 26 February 1977.)
Some of the Emergency slogans were: "Help consolidate the hundred gains of the Emergency" and "The guilty will never escape punishment." But the people did not know what gains were, while they recalled the judgement of Allahabad High Court against Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

In the parliamentary election of June 1977 the North liberated the South from the Emergency. While the southern states voted much for Congress (1), that imposed the Emergency, the northern states for the Janata Party that opposed it. At the election to the state legislature A. D. M. K. (Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, later on changed into All India A. D. M. K.), founded by cine actor M. G. Ramachandran, won 126 seats and formed the ministry. The expectations of a corruption free administration and the popularity that M. G. R. gained through the screen favoured the victory of this party. The Indira Gandhi administration dismissed the ministry from power on 17 February 1980,[8] but in the same year the party returned to power with 129 seats. Chief Minister M G. Ramachandran and Education Minister C. Aranganayakam initiated a series of reforms in education. Introduction of higher secondary course (+2) in schools, extension of mid-day meal scheme for school children, improvement in the working condition of teachers and establishment of new universities at Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli and Coimbatore were the most notable. The relaxation of prohibition policy augmented the state revenue by about 200 crores of rupees.[9] However, the period was marked by dwindled Central investment, recurring droughts, wide spread unemployment and troubles in the farm front. The ministry sought to make a venture in navigation but the Centre nipped it in the bud, for it refused permission for the purchase of ships for the Poompuhar Shipping Corporation.[10]

Bleak Farms

Unrest in the farm was not a new phenomenon, it was there under the Nayaks, the Muslims and the British. But it assumed a new dimension when the tenants and labourers organised themselves against the landlords, while the land lords against the administration. This trend became pronounced during the D. M. K. and A. D. M. K. rule.

8. *Indian Express*, Madras, 19 February 1980.
9. *Ibid*, Madurai, 25 January, 1980.
10. *Ibid*, 12 January 1983.

In the fold of the peasants were the big land lords, small land holders, tenants and labourers. Political, linguistic, communal and economic factors combined together in creating sharp differences among them. As the result of political expansion, different communities mostly Telugu, Kannada, Marathi and Malayalee, moved into Tamil Nadu and gained possession of fertile lands. They emerged as caste Hindus and as the great land owning class. In the process the Tamils were driven to the barrenregion in the deep South or were reduced to servitude. Those who were reduced to servitude became tenants and labourers, while those who escaped became small land holders in barren areas. The British imperialism did not alter this situation, for they compromised with the system. As per the census of 1971 there were about forty two lakhs of landless labourers and their proportion was the highest in the districts of Madurai, Thanjavur and Coimbatore, where the non-Tamil domination was long and ruthless.

The land lords settled their relations with the tenants and labourers in an oppressive system of exploitation. *Varum* or crop sharing and *kuthagai* or rental system represented the forms of tenancy. In *varum* the land lord took as much as two thirds to three fifths of the produce from the tenant, while in *kuthagai* he collected a rent ranging from sixty to seventy five per cent of the gross produce, after meeting the cost of production. Pretty little was left for the support of the tenants.[11] Agricultural labourers called *pannaiyals*, usually received employment only for 100 to 120 days a year. Unable to support themselves, they took loans on interest, ranging from 200 to 300 per cent, and when they found it impossible to clear the debt, they agreed to serve as bonded labourers, pledging their young children to the land lords. Harijans, as mostly they were, with their wives and children, worked day and night for their masters. By 1982 a labourer in Dharmapuri-North Arcot area received in return for bonded labour two meals a day and 350

11. S. Vijayalakshmi, Report on Peasant Movements in Tamil Nadu, (unpublished) paras 2-33.

rupees a year.[12]

The tenants and labourers, overworked, underfed and ill-treated, as they were, found their life dark. They were subjected to illegal levies, illegal labour and severe torture. In addition the land lords measured away their share with large *marakkals*, denied receipts for the payments made, implicated them in false cases, fed them with cowdung and even evicted them from their huts.[13] A report of the Union Home Ministry indicated that among the states of India, Tamil Nadu showed the greatest inequality in the distribution of rural assets.[14]

Surplus Labour

The major factor that contributed to this tragic anomaly was the accumulation of surplus labour and consequent pressure on land. The western countries too faced a similar situation but they developed industries and drew the surplus labour from the field to the factories. Independence offered an opportunity to Tamil Nadu to promote rapid industrialisation and to find a solution to the problems, experienced by the farm labour. The Congress made a beginning in this direction;[15] before long, however, the downward trend made itself felt. Directed by Nehruian socialism, the administration extended the frontiers of state control, created a public sector and took over the commanding heights of the economy. But the bureaucracy appeared interested in control rather than contribution, as the result of which the public sector incurred colossal losses and nothing substantial flowed from the commanding heights of the economy so as to keep the private sector going. There were grievances that the private agencies could do nothing worthwhile, without lincenses and permits, for which influence and bribe were essential. In fact neither did the administration do nor did it allow the people to do.

12. *Indian Express*, Madurai, 27 March 1982.
13. S. Vijayalakshmi, op. cit. paras 5-30.
14. *Indian Express*, Madurai, 27 March 1982.
15. *The Hindu*, Madras, 18 February, 1976.

This trend assumed alarming proportions since 1967. While the state had no money for proceeding with industrialisation, it scared away private capital under threat of nationalisation. As the state passed under the control of regional parties and seemed helpless to bring in pressure, the Centre appeared reluctant to invest capital.[16] As a result of these failures, the pressure on land marked an increase. The rural poor in the mean time taking advantage of free instruction and free meal, received education but found it impossible to seek any employment in competition with town dwellers. The Dravida Kazhagam and the Communist Party, which extended the spheres of activity to the villages, drew these unemployed poor, to their influence. The growing helplessness and awareness rendered their confrontation with land lords inevitable.

Not a Drop to Spare

As the industries failed to draw the surplus labour from land, so did trade. The social inmobility that followed from this predicament rendered it essential for the people to fall back on cultivation. Therefore what appeared essential for the state was to create an infra structure favourable for the promotion of agriculture, intensive as well as extensive.

Tamil Nadu with its barren tracts, excessive heat and traditionally oppressive administration seldom offered any attraction to the peasants. What has rendered the task of the peasants insurmountable is the want of water. Against an average of 4000 cubic metres of water per capita in India, it is just 570 in Tamil Nadu.[17] As a result in most of the areas the peasants are compelled to draw water from deep wells to irrigate the fields. Inspite of this handicap, they supply vegitables, edible oil, food grains, fruits, flowers, cattle feed

16. In 1980-81 the state collected Rs. 58 80 as tax per capita while the centre Rs. 121.04 from Tamil Nadu. In 1982 plan period the Central investment was just Rs. 42 in Tamil Nadu while Rs. 1100 in Sikkim. (Reserve Bank of India, Bulletin, August 1981.)

17. State Planning Commission, Towards a Green Revolution, 1972-74, Madras, 1972, p. 58.

and herds of cattle to Kerala.

In contrast to what is happening in Tamil Nadu is the ravage of heavy floods in Kerala. Against a per capita water potential of 0.03 *mcft* in Tamil Nadu, it is 0.12 in Karnataka and 0.41 in Kerala.[18] The two monsoons bring so copious a down-pour that floods roll down the western slopes of the Ghats. Eighty per cent of this run off is in summer months, when Tamil Nadu reels under severe drought. In 1977 the Central Water Commission has estimated that among the numerous streams of Kerala, in forty one rivers alone flow waste into the sea 2561 *tmc* water. By 1980 Kerala was utilising just three per cent of its potential, that itself mostly for power generation. After providing for the future needs, the surplus in these Kerala rivers is estimated at 1500 *tmc* water, of which the requirement of Tamil Nadu is only just one fourth. As the elevation of the foot hills on Kerala side is higher than that on Tamil Nadu side it offers easy scope for diversion through tunnels eastward. Electricity can be generated in the process and food can be raised in Tamil Nadu for the benefit of Kerala too.[19] Yet the Kerala administration has obstinately refused to agree to any diversion of wasted waters. In July 1980 R. Balakrishna Pillai, Minister of Kerala, declared that not a drop of water could be spared for Tamil Nadu.[20] This reflected upon the attitude of Kerala on this vital issue.

Greatly moved by the sad plight of the peasants of Tamil Nadu and guided by their own interests, the British brought the states of Mysore and Travancore to a settlement, erected dams and diverted a fraction of Kaveri and Periyar waters. The grievance of the peasants is that since the British left the

18. *Indian Express*, Madurai, 18 September 1980.
19. *The Hindu*, Madras, 29 December, 1978.
Indian Express, Madurai, 24 December 1976.
20. *Indian Express*, Madras, 8 July, 1980.
Strange still Tamil Nadu contributes 73 *tmc* water to the rivers of Kerala against 52.5 *tmc* it receives for the Periyar and Parambiculam projects. (*Indian Express*, 25 August 1977)

country neither did the Centre nor did Tamil Nadu divert even a drop of water for the benefit of the peasants. On the other-hand they tolerated a situation which made the states of Kerala and Karnataka more aggressive on the waters due to the state from the Kaveri.[21] Frequently, the Ganga-Kaveri link, the Mahanadi-Kaveri link and the garland canal have been held out, but they proved to be just a fantasy. As a result the peasants not only could not improve their lot but several of them are to die in water disputes. A remedy lay in the nationalisation of all water resources but paradoxically the administration raised opposition for fear that it would lose its control over the Kaveri system.[22]

Big officers and Big Bags

Since Independence the state greatly extended its sphere of authority. Tacitus has rightly asserted: more corrupt the state, more numerous are the laws. Tamil Nadu is no exception. It so happened that the peasants have to deal with those state departments which are known as proverbially corrupt. Among them are: revenue, electricity, police, registration, medical service and local administration. An impression has gained currency that unless bribes and presents greased the administration, it raised objections and difficulties, causing delay in or denial of service. The farmers found it impossible to receive sanction of a loan, approval for house construction, power connection, care in a hospital and registration of a document

21. To the Kaveri system Tamil Nadu contributes 210 tmc. while Karnataka 327 and Kerala 133. In addition Tamil Nadu has lower reparian right, while the two other states have western rivers flowing waste into the sea. Under the agreement with Mysore, that expired in 1974, Tamil Nadu has developed 28.21 million hectares while Karnataka 6.83 million. But Karnataka has built four dams and deprived Tamil Nadu of its traditional share. Against 750 tmc in the Kaveri System Tamil Nadu demands 642, Karnataka 410 and Kerala 209 and hence no settlement. (*Indian Express*, Madras, 19 September, 1980.)

22. Karunanidhi opposed nationalisation of rivers, while M.G.R. favoured nationalisation of only inter-state rivers. (*Sunday Standard* Madurai, 6 July 1980)

except through bribery.[23] In the mean time the police raids conducted in the name of tax evasion, excise, liquor and immoral traffic in women frequently disturbed the peace in the villages.

The nationalisation of bus transport created new problems for the peasants. The private agencies, subject to the permits issued, operated an efficient and cheap system. The T. V. S. that was noted for its punctuality was considered the wonder of Madurai. The Congress nationalised the bus transport in Madras City in 1948 and the express routes in 1959. Despite the complaints against over crowding and recurring losses, the Karunanidhi ministry extended nationalisation in 1972.[24] Before long the peasants experienced the difference. Frequency of services went down, while over crowding and break downs became common. The commuters who were so long invited to travel in private buses had to beg for tickets to travel and to take their vegitables. Worse still the bus fares were periodically revised, yet only to incur losses year after year.[25] Lorry traffic too appeared difficult for the check posts were increased in number and interruptions by the officials turned a routine feature.[26] In fact freedom of movement, guaranteed in the

23. E. D. Devadason has rightly asserted: "government has become all pervasive, time consuming, fully corrupt and absolutely exploitative at all levels." (*A Study of Conversion*, Madras, 1982, p. 7)
24. E.V.R. remarked that his teacher spent more time on becating than on teaching. Likewise State Transport in Madras City spent more time in issuing tickets than for taking passengers to destination.
25. *Indian Express*, Madras, 14 September, 1978.
26. In 1978 the private operators charged Rs. 12 for a trip from Madurai to Madras, while the State Transport Rs. 26. To compel the tourist bus agencies to increase the fare the Karunanidhi ministry increased the taxes. While the T.V.S. charged 6 p. minimum, the State Transport raised it to 20 p. and in 1981 to 30 p. By 1981 in New Delhi where money over flows, the transport system charges 30 p. for 15 k.m. while in Tamil Nadu where poverty is great it charges 90 p. for the same distance. Transport industry being highly lucrative, the private sector was making a 30 % profit, but the State Transport in 1980-81 incurred a loss of twelve crores of rupees. Yet it is not transferred to the private sector. (*Indian Express*, 6 April, 1981 and 22 Apirl 1982)

Constitution, is not only made costly but restrictive.

What served as a constant source of grievance was the discrimination that the peasants experienced at different levels. When the five year plans and public sectors failed in their targets, it appeared that the economy of the country could not be supported without the denial of market prices for the farm products. The Sub Committee of the Planning Commission reported in 1971: It was impractical to pay to the farmers prices equivalent even to the production costs. It would lead to a steep rise in prices of industrial raw materials [27]

In fact the administration and industry joined together in revising the taxes and prices. As a result almost every year saw a steep increase of water cess, power rates and input prices. The factory products like cement, implements, cloths and oil were either scarce in the market or highly costly. Though the Janata Government subsidised the cost of inputs, the situation changed after the Congress (I) take over. The prices of fertilizers, pesticides, diesel and cattle feed increased three fold in the three years ending with 1980.[28] Labour problems, vagaries of the monsoon and theft presented more of difficulties. If the crop failed the farmers were left alone. On the other hand if they collected the harvest, the administration confronted them with a levy, at a price fixed by it. As a peasant wrote: "big officers came with big bags, sit on his neck and measure all his paddy away, as if he had committed a great sin."[29] Apart from these, the administration fixed the prices of products like sugar cane and hide so low that it rendered the life of the peasants miserable. When the private lands were taken over, the public authorities offered so marginal

27. At check posts particulary at Hosur and Kavalkinaru the usual method adopted is to direct their victims to unload the lorry and cart loads to prove that there was no contraband inside. This condition was waived when a present was made.
28. *The Statesman*, New Delhi, 28 November 1980.
29. *The Hindu*, Madras, 16 June 1980.

a price that it worked just a fraction of market price.[30]

The policy of the Central Government appeared unhelpful to the paddy growers. Until 1973 the procurement price of paddy was higher than that of wheat, but subsequently wheat received a perferential treatment. In 1978 the price of paddy per quintal was fixed at Rs. 77.00 against Rs. 112.50 for wheat.[31] The budget of 1978-79 provided for a subsidy of Rs. 23.19 per quintal of wheat against just four pies for paddy.[32] In 1980 the price fixed for a quintal of paddy was Rs.99/- against Rs. 117/- for wheat. In relation with his counterpart in Kerala the agriculturist of Tamil Nadu found his position miserable. Working under highly favourable weather and with nominal labour, the peasant of Kerala found it possible to gain a high return for his products like tea, coconut and rubber. This was because of an advantageous import policy. On the other hand a peasant of Tamil Nadu working under the most arduous circumstances has to content with a miserable existence. While Kerala was left free to sell its products like timber and electricity at any price it could bargain for, Tamil Nadu found itself denied of such right to sell its products like sandal and cement. Naturally such a kind of policy had its natural impact upon the economy of the state.[33]

Peasant Troubles

As a result of the interaction between these forces, there emerged two trends in the struggle-the labourers and tenants demanding higher wages from the landlords and the big land-

30. *Ibid*, 25 March, 1967.
31. In 1978 the Government fixed the price of one pie per square feet of land in Tanjore for acquisition. But as the market price was 100 p. the court raised it to 80 p. (*The Hindu*, 30 July 1978).
32. *Indian Express*, Madras. 17 July 1978.
33. Union Minister Vasant Sathe admitted that all industrial and productive activity in the country a id inter related policies of the government were geared to meet the requirements of only the sixty million elite. (*Indian Express*, 23 January, 1983).

lords together with small land holders seeking remunerative prices from thead ministration. Involved in the struggle between the tenants and land lords were linguistic and communal sentiments mostly centred on social status. As a result there came violent clashes; the untouchable communities particularly the Adi Dravidas making the greatest sacrifices. The land lords ignored administrative exactions so long as they found it possible to pass on the burden to the labcurers and tenants. But in the changed circumstances they found their tenants and labourers increasingly defiant. In consequence they turned against the administration.

In 1955 56 the landless labourers occupied waste lands in Kambam Valley, Namakkal and Dharmapuri. There were demonstrations against evictions in the districts of Chengalpattu and Tiruchirapalli. In the clashes at Thunisaramedu in South Arcot district five people died. At Nochikulam in Tirunelveli district two persons lost their lives. In 1966 at Keelavenbani in Thanjavur district forty two Adi Dravidas were burned to death.[34] In the land grab movement in Dharmapuri district in 1972 eight people died. At Villupuram and Devakottai in 1978 fifteen Adi Dravidas were killed and at Chinna Oonjanai five more.[35] In 1982 more clashes broke out. As per official reports, two Adi Dravidas were killed at Tiruverkkad[36] and one each at Minnal and Villupuram. Nine people died in clashes at Puliyangudi and six at Ayyapuram, though the causes at these places were not merely agricultural.[37] A letter of L. Elayaperumal suggests that in May-June 1982 eight Adi Dravidas were burned alive or hacked to death.[38]

Tirupattur and Meenakshipuram represented two extremes

34. E.D. Devadason, *op. cit*, p. 8.
35. *The Hindu*, Madras, 29 June, 1978.
36. *Indian Express*, Madurai, 3 October, 1982.
37. *Ibid.*, 13 June 1982.
38. L. Elayaperumal, M. L. A., letter to Yogendra Makwanaji, copy, dated 28 June 1982.

of this tragic struggle. The labourers, mostly educated, greatly annoyed at the expolitation that they suffered at the hands of land lords, mostly Telugus. Kannadigas and Marathas, turned extremists. As Naxalities, they gathered explosives, it is believed from the rail yards of Cholayarpettai, and established themselves in the Yelagiri and Javadi Hills. Led by Tamilvanan, Tamilarasan and Seeralan, they conducted study classes, organised torch light processions and made country bombs. The raids that they conducted in pursuit of their mission were marked by explosions and murders. As a result there came to prevail a serious law and order situation.[39] On the other hand in 1981-82 the Adi Dravidas of Minakshipuram in Tirunelveli district *en masse* walked over to Islam, so also did several people in the villages of Madurai district. These incidents alarmed the caste Hindu organisations.

In their search for a meaningful survival the other sections of the peasant community formed their own organisations. Narayanaswami Naidu brought the farmers, mostly of dry lands, into the Tamilnadu Agriculturists' Association. When the peasants were passing through evil days due to recurring droughts, low prices and mounting dues, they found in him a leader, ready to make sacrifices. Accordingly he led agitations and suffered imprisonment. In 1975 he went on deputation to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to plead the cause of farmers, but returned disappointed. The Congress (I) formed the National Farmers' Association, while the Janata Party the State Agriculturists' Association. The political and communal affiliations created dissensions, yet the Tamilnadu Agriculturists, Association which entered politics as the Indian Farmers' and Toilers' Party in 1982 continued as the most popular.[40] The, demands of the farmers reflected upon their grievances. Mostly, fr omulated at their conference at Coimbatore on 24 April 1980 they included: nationalisation of all water resources, eradica-

39. *Indian Express*, Madurai, 20 January 1981 and Ibid., 10 January. 1982.
40. *Ibid*, 12 March 1980.

tion of corruption in administration, remunerative prices for farm products, crop insurance, liquidation of debts, payment for digging wells, abolition of land revenue and reduction of irrigation cess, electricity charges and input prices. Though these appeared legitimate, the state was not prepared to concede.[41]

Reform and Repression

The administration sought to tackle the situation partly through reform and partly through repression. This policy agreed with what was traditional during the British rule. Nevertheless reform was the first to be attempted, for the Congress Party had not completely wriggled out of the ideals for which it fought for freedom. In 1946 the Congress ministry undertook the rural reconstruction programme and set up the State Rural Welfare Board to implement the scheme. It selected eight villages for intensive development. In 1952 the administration launched with great fanfare the community development project in the districts of Coimbatore, Tiruchirapalli and Madurai. It appointed a number of welfare officers and *gramasevikas* and placed a large number of vehicles at their disposal to enable them to bring about intensive rural development and self sufficiency through the promotion of irrigation, agriculture, communication, sanitation and education. These projects, presided over by Union Minister S.K. Dey created to lot of noise and jeeps appeared even in remote villages.[42] But the inhabitants breathed a sigh of relief, when jeeps disappeared from market places with the failure of the projects so that they could send their kids to the schools with greater confidence of safe return.

With the failure of these projects, it was not possible for the surplus labour to move out of the fields. This led the

41. *The Tribune*, New Delhi, 27 November 1980.
42. Government of Madras, Rural Welfare in Madras, 1973, pp. 1-32
Do, Community Projects in Madras State. Madras, 1953, pp. 4-5.

administration to a bid to setlet the inhabitants at the expense of land lords. The result was the enactment of land legislations. The Land Ceiling Act of 1960 fixed thirty standard acres for a family of five and in 1970 this extent was brought down to fifteen.[43] At the same time a fair rent was fixed. The Congress ministry fixed it at 33 1/3 to 40 per cent[44] and the M.G.R. ministry to 25 to 40 per cent. These legislations too did not yield the desired result. Through binami deals or official collusion the land lords managed to evade surrender of their lands. What the administration could secure possession of was the most unwanted. The Government alloted three cents each of land as house cites to a few of the landless families, but it was very meagre.[45]

As programmes and reforms failed to yield the desired results, repression appeared as the direct method of dealing with peasant unrest. Between 1975 and 1982 the police forces launched a series of operations against the Naxals. Either in what were called encounters or under police custody nineteen young men died and about 250 people were jailed.[46] The green turbaned peasants led by Narayanaswami Naidu launched agitations in 1972 and 1980. In Coimbatore, Dharmapuri, South Arcot and Madurai there were serious disturbances. Barricades were raised, culverts were blasted, buses were set on fire and payment of taxes was refused. As a result army was called out and police firing was resorted to.[47] Between 1972 and 1982 fifty four peasants were killed in police firings and more than 25,000 were taken under custody.[48] As a result of these sacrifices, the peasants could wrest certain concessions. The M.G.R. ministry reduced the power rate to 15

43. Government of Tamil Nadu, *History of Land Revenue Settlement*, Madras, 1976, pp. 1-6.
44. Sonachalam, S., *The Land Reform in Tamilnadu*, Madras, 1970, pp. 32-62.
45. E. D. Devadason, op. cit, p. 7.
46. *Indian Express*, Madras, 20 January, 1982.
47. *The Hindu*, Madras, 17 and 24, April 1972.
48. *Indian Express*, Maduraj, 27 May, 1980 and 28 June, 1982.

pies per unit from 16 pies, fixed during the Emergency and wrote off sixty crores of the one hundred and fifty crores, given as loan to the peasants.[49] Yet the basic issues remain, for in India, itself one of the poorest countries of the world,[50] Tamil Nadu has recorded the highest rate of rural poverty and highest rate of unemployment.[51] The hope of Tamil Nadu lies in western rivers and eastern seas.

49. Maharashtra wrote off 49 crores, while Karnataka 75 crores of peasants' debt. (*The Tribune*, New Delhi, 27 November, 1980).
50. Per capita income in a month is Rs. 15/- in India against Rs. 2160/- in U. K. and Rs. 4320/- in Australia. (*Indian Express*, 19 November 1979).
51. In 1980 those who lived below poverty line; i. e. Rs. 65/- a month were 62.98 % in rural and 52.22 % in urban areas of Tamil Nadu against 21.47 and 21.84 in Punjab. Unemployment of Tamil Nadu in 1980 was 16.1 % against 8.5 % in India as a whole. (*Indian Express*, 14 March 1980 and 5 January 1981) As per a survey made by Indian Express non workers outnumber workers by eighty lakhs in Tamil Nadu (*Indian Express*, 5 December, 1982).

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